BOUND BY C. MURTON

John Carter Brown.

A Modest and Cleare

ANSWER

TO

Mr. Balls Discourse of

set formes of PRAYER.

Set forth in a most Seasonable time, when this KINGDOME is now in Consultation about Matters of that Nature, and so many godly *Long* after the Resolution in that Point.

Written by the Reverend and Learned, *John Cotton*, B.D. and Teacher of the Church of Christ at *Boston* in new *England*.

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JOHN CARTER BROWN.

RPJCB

To the courteous READER.

WEe thinke it not meet, to fall a commending the *Author* of this worke, Who hath beene ſo long pretious in the hearts of all the Saints, and for his learning, paines and piety ſo famous in the Churches of Chriſt; that his owne Workes may praiſe him in the Gate, though wee be ſilent. Neither ſhall we need (as uſually men doe in their Epiſtles) to ſet gloſſes upon the worke thy ſelfe (if thou weigheſt it with a ſerious and impartiall ſpirit) we believe, will doe it, and ſave us that labour. This onely wee ſay, thou wilt diſcerne (as ſome other godly learned, who have peruſed it before alſo have done) ſuch a cleare judgement, dexterous aptneſſe, and pithy plainneſſe in a moderate and brotherly ſtile in all his Anſwers,

that thou wilt think thou seest the very spirit of the Authour breathing in every page and line. Now, the father of lights cleare all our mindes, that, if his blessed will so be, we may thinke and judge, and speake and write the same thing; And the God of all Grace warme our hearts with a love of such truthes as we doe know, that wee may walke in the light and and power thereof, to the praise of his Grace, till we all meet in one, and see him as hee is, and so be filled with all the fulnesse of God himselfe for ever more, *Amen*.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENTS
Vpon the Discourse of set-formes of PRAYER.

YOur Preface touching the Definition, and nature of prayer I insist not upon; as not much materiall to the clearing of the Cause in hand: it is enough in this Case, to premise what prayer in Generall is, and what is lawfull prayer: Prayer (in generall, comprehending both lawfull and unlawfull) is the lifting up (or powring out) of the desires of the heart for Divine blessings; Divine, I say, that is, for such as God onely can give, either for the nature, or kind of the thing given, or for the manner of giving.

Lawfull prayer, is a lifting up (or powring out) of the desires of the heart unto God, for Divine blessings, accordine to his will in the name of Jesus Christ, by the helpe of the spirit of Grace.

CHAP. I.
The State of the Question.

FOr stating of the *Question*, you have fixe Rules; of which I will onely touch so many, as doe more neerly touch upon the Cause.

In your first Rule you say, it is not a Prayer, as penned, but as rehearsed, with understanding, feeling of wants, humility, confidence.

Answ. Nor is it a prayer as rehearsed, though rehearsed with understanding, feeling of wants, humility, confidence, unlesse a man therein powre out his owne desires unto God; for I may reade and rehearse a printed Prayer, (say one of *Davids* propheticall prayers against the enemies of the Church) yea, I may reade it with understanding, with feeling of the wants of such a mercy, and also with humility, (in conscience of the Churches unworthinesse of such a mercy, and with confidence that God will doe for the Church now, as *David* prayed then, &c. Yet this will not be my prayer, unlesse I put up mine owne desires in it, but about this there is no question.

Answ. 2. Though it be not a prayer, as penned or printed, yet is a means, and helpe and forme of prayer, which either must finde a warrant from the Word, or fall under the breach of the second Commandement.

In the second Rule you say the controversie is not of this or that prescript forme of Prayer in particular, much lesse of one for substance of matter, faulty and erronious: But of a prescript forme of prayer in generall, whether it be lawfull to use any set forme of prayer at all, though for the matter thereof never so sound and allowable.

Answ. But so to put the State of the *Question*, is indeed, to leade your selfe and others into temptations: for if it may be once obtained; that some prescript forme is lawfull in the Generall, this in the Theory will straight be reduced to this practice, to perswade men to joyne in such a prescript form of prayer as is justly liable to manifold exceptions, both for matter and manner,

If such as were compelled to worship the Lord before the golden Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, should put the state of the *Question*, not of such particular Calves, but of Calves, or Cherubims in generall (for one forme of Cherubims were like Calves) whether it be not lawfull to worship the Lord before any Cherubims at all? It may be easily conceived, what the issue would be, the *Question* admitteth the lawfulnesse of some Cherubims in Generall (which is out of question.) The practice will conclude the lawfulnesse of *Ieroboams* Calves in particular; which was the sinne which made *Israel* to sinne.

2. *Your fift Rule acknowledgeth that neither Christ nor his Apostles, prescribed any set forme of prayer, and therefore that no prescript forme of prayer or lyturgie is simply necessary.*

Answ. But this argueth not only no necessity of prescript formes, but also no expediencie thereof to the edification of the Church, unlesse it might be presumed that there is some helpe or meanes of Gods worship expedient to the edification of the Church, which

which never came into the heart of Christ and of his Apostles to commend unto the Church.

In your sixt Rule you professe, you never held it lawfull, to tye any mans selfe, or to be tyed alwaies to a set forme of Prayer: as knowing that our requests are to be framed according to the present necessity and occasion.

Answ. But by the same reason, neither will it be lawfull to be tyed at any time to an ordinary use of any set forme of prayer at all: for there is no change of time wherein the Church hath not some speciall occasion to change their *Petitions*, either by adding some *Petitions* more then formerly were needfull, or by taking away some *Petitions* which were formerly needfull (it may be at the last meeting) which are not needfull now: And looke upon what grounds it may be lawfull to tye others, or to be tyed by them, to a set forme to day, upon the same grounds it will be as lawfull to tye them, and to be tyed by them to morrow, the next *Saboth* as well as this, and the third *Saboth* as well as both, and all *Saboths* as well as some.

If tying to set formes be lawfull, and thought expedient, for uniformity in Gods worship one day; the same uniformity is as expedient to be attended to in every *Saboth*, as in one; or if tying to set formes be requisite to supply the defects of the gifts of ignorant Ministers, then thereby a cloake is made for the covering and sheltering of ignorant Ministers; who had more neede to be shouldered speedily out of the Church then to be sheltered therein one day to an end. And besides, if such set formes be prescribed for the succour of ignorant Ministers, then such Ministers as have received the gift of prayer, have no need at any time, nor use of prescribed and set formes of prayer at all.

Object. *And if it be said that it is not intended, to make it lawfull at any time, to tye or to be tyed to a set forme of Prayer, so as to offer up no more, nor fewer Petitions then what are prescribed in the Booke, but onely to warrant the lawfullnesse of some set formes of Prayer for some occasions.*

Answ. It may be justly demanded, whether the same authority which tyeth to a set forme of prayer, for such or such occasions, may not as well tye to a set forme of prayer for all other occasions, and if authority may tye the Church to any set forme of prayer upon any occasion, whether may not the same Authority by the same Rule, forbid all other formes of prayer, besides upon the same occasion.

Disc. *In Briefe (say you) the controversie is, whether it be not lawfull to reade a Prayer upon a booke, or to make our desires known in a set forme of words, when the things we beg, are allowable, fit, and nesessarie, and*

and

when it is done with understanding, feeling of our wants, faith in Gods promises, and reverence of his Majestie.

Which *Question* you spread forth into three branches.

Whether it be lawfull in private to use a set forme of prayer, or upon any occasion to reade as Prayer, a Prayer upon a Booke.

Whether a set forme of Prayer sound, and pertinent, for the substance of the matter, grave and simple for the order and manner, not prejudising, abridging, or hindering by the length thereof, the Preaching of the Word; may in any sort be tollerated in the Church, or read by the Minister in the publique Congregation.

In case it should be unlawfull for a Minister or the Master of the family to read a prescript forme of Prayer, yet whether it should be unlawfull to be present at such assemblies.

Your Assertion is, that a stinted forme of Prayer is lawfull to be used both in publique and private. &c. And though it should be sin in the Minister or in the Governour of the family, yet may the people in the Congregation, and the Inferiour in the family be present at such Prayers without sin or scruple of conscience?

Answ. How far wee go along with you in the *Question* thus stated and where we stick, may be expressed in these particulars.

First Wee grant, a Christian man whether Minister, or of private place, may by the gift of Prayer which he hath received, compile to himselfe a set forme of Prayer, and may use the same for his Prayer, whether in publique or private according to his place: yet so, as not to limit himselfe to those words: seeing he knoweth not what farther occasion may be given him of inlarging his Petitions, by new occurrences of matters from Gods providence, and by the inlargement of the help of Gods spirit: nor so to limit himselfe as to stick long in any set forme of Prayer least it turne into a customarie, and empty forme, contrary to the watchfullnesse unto Prayer, which must be Religiously kept of all growing Christians.

2. A man may give unto another holy directions, and rules for Prayer, and may also set downe some forms of Prayer as examples of such rules, but not to prescribe them as set forms to them, to be used by them for their Prayers.

3. A man that readeth a forme of Prayer in a Book, may be so affected with it, as in the desires of his heart to go along with it, and to use it for his present Prayer, as it may thus fall out in reading one of *Calvins* Prayers, printed after his Lectures, or such other like.

4. Wee deny not, but a man that is affected with some Petitions in a Prayer devised by others, he may lawfully make use of them,

them, and interfert them ordinarily into his owne Prayers; But not to take up an intire forme of Prayer devised by another, and to make it his own ordinary forme of Prayer.

Wee grant Magistrates or other Christians may commend some Heads of Petitions to the Church according to the present ttate of things (which the Church as they see fit) may present and commend to God in their Prayers. 5.

Thus farre we consent, but farther we cannot go, but do rather conceive it to be unlawfull.

To set a part, and take up a set forme of Prayer, and to use it as an ordinary Prayer, that which is devised by others, whom God hath not called to be a mouth to me. 1.

Wee conceive it also to be unlawfull to bring in ordinarily any other Bookes, into the publique worship of God, in the Church, besides the Book of God, and therefore do see no more warrant to read out of a Prayer-Booke, the publique Prayers of a Church: then out of a book of *Homylies* to read the publique Sermons of the Ministers of the Church. 2.

Wee account it alike (if not more unlawfull) for *Ancestors* to prescribe or injoyne set forms of Prayers to their posterity, or for one Church to prescribe set forms of Prayer unto another. 3.

We hold it in like manner unlawfull, for one Church to receive such set forms of Prayer from another, and to use them for their own Prayers. 4.

We take it to be unlawfull also, for the people of God to joyn in such prayers which are so devised and prescribed to be read unto them, and to be offered up in their names, as their prayers. 5.

To apply these things more punctually to the particular branches of the *Question*, as they are proposed, and stated by you.

For your first branch, we do not make it a controversie, whether it be lawfull to make knowne our desires in a set forme of words, in such sence as we granted above in our first point of consent: nor do we hold it unlawfull to read a prayer upon a book and therein to expresse our desires in such sort as we granted in our third point of consent.

But nevertheless, we do not discerne it to be lawfull no not in private to use ordinarily a set forme of prayer devised by others, nor to read such a prayer out of a book, for the ordinary prayer of a mans selfe much lesse of his *family*.

For your second Branch, though wee neither deny the use of set form in private, nor in publique, so it be compiled by a mans owne gifts, or by those whom God calleth to be his mouth.

Yet wee dare not allowe the reading of a set forme of publique prayer out of a Booke penned for the purpose,

and those prayers compiled by the members of one Congregation and imposed upon others.

For your third Branch, we for our parts cannot justifie it to be lawfull so to present, either in the family or in the congregation where, and when such prescript formes are read for the prayers of the company, as to joyne with them, or to seeme to joyne with them in such worship.

But proceed wee now to consider the weight of the reasons which you give for your judgement and practice.

CHAP. II.

Wherein your first Reason is propounded and considered.

THat forme of Prayer (say you) *is just and lawfull wherein all things essentiall to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed:*

But all things essentiall to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed in read prayer, or in a prescript forme; what is required in holy prayer, more than that the matter be allowable and fit, the manner holy, reverend, faithfull, your hearts laid open, and petitions forced with as strong, or stronger reasons then wee are able of our selves to presse them with all; and may not a prayer holy and fit for the matter thereof be read with knowledge, feeling of our wants, earnestnesse of our desires, holinesse of our affection, and faith in Gods promises.

Answ. There is more required to a faithfull holy prayer then allowable and fit matter, and holy inward matter in good affections of the heart, for an outward holy manner is required likewise, else a man might pray to God allowable and fit petitions before an Image; and I deny not, but that God may sometimes assist a man in such a prayer with holy manner of inward gracious affections: as for instance, holy *Bilney* might finde his heart warmed in prayer to Christ, when he look'd at him as really present in the Sacrament, or else hee would never have called so zealously on the people to turne all that adoration of dead Images to the adoration of Christ in the blessed Sacrament; never the lesse such a prayer was unlawfull, through a defect in the outward manner of it; an outward meanes being called in for helpe in prayer, which God had not sanctified for that end.

Let me give you an other instance, when the *Corinthians* prayed in the Church publiquely, in the spirit, but withall in a strange tongue, their prayer wanted not allowable and fit matter, nor

holy

holy inward manner (for they prayed in the spirit) yet the prayer was unlawfull through defect of an outward holy manner, because it being put up in a strange tongue before others, did not tend to the edification of others: In the case in hand, though prayer upon a Booke prescribed by the authority of man may somtimes be furnished with allowable and fit matter, and sometimes uttered with inward holy affections; yet still it will be unlawfull through the defect of an outward holy manner. If such a prescribed booke be found (as we conceive it will) an Image or helpe to prayer, devised by men, but not ordained by God, and so no better then an Image forbidden in the second Commandement.

In reading the Scriptures, the eye doth leade the heart, and yet it may be read with judgement, reverence, meekneſſe, joy, and why may not the like affections be moved in read prayer? *Disc.*

Reading of Scriptures is an Ordinance of God, and not an Image or imagination of man; and therefore God not onely may assist and blesse the reading of the Scriptures, with inward good affections, but is usually wonted so to doe in an honest and good heart, as delighting to breath in his owne Ordinances: If it could be proved that the reading of a prescript forme of prayer upon a Booke were an ordinance of God sanctified for the edification of the Church (as the reading of the Scriptures is) wee might ordinarily expect the like assistance and blessing in reading of the one as well as of the other; the comparison would be more sutable, if in stead of reading the Scriptures, were put the reading of Sermons and Homilies in the Church, for which we finde as little warrant as for reading of Prayers; nor can we expect a greater blessing upon the one then upon the other; we do not deny that read prayer may leade and affect the heart, as may a Sermon read at home: But then neither is such a read prayer prescribed by others, nor set a part by me as my prayer; no more then the reading of such a Sermon is my preaching; which is not because the heart and the eye are at variance in such a case (as your discourse speaketh) but because God doth not ordinarily delight to blesse the heart with gracious affections, when the eyes goe a whoring after the imaginations and inventions of men. *Answ.*

Asaph and his Brethren could praiſe God in a forme of words, set downe by the Prophet David; *and if a set forme of words may be allowed in thanſgiving (which is one part of prayer) it cannot be condemned in petitions.* *Disc.*

We doe not deny a set forme, either of Petition or of thanksgiving *Answ.*

giving appointed by God, either to be read or ſung: but wee deny that God hath allowed either the ordinary officers in his Church (whether *Prieſts* or *Levites* in the old Teſtament, or *Paſtors* and *Teachers* in the new) to appoint ſuch formes of read prayers for the Church, or the Church to take up ſuch formes of read prayers from them; God that hath forbidden us to make any graven Image to our ſelves, hath not forbidden or limited himſelfe to deviſe and preſcribe what formes of worſhip himſelfe ſhall ſee good for our uſe; the prayers which are taken to paraleil petitions and thankeſgiving might have beene ſpared; we neither refuſe the formes of the one, nor of the other, ſuch as are commended to us of God in his Word; the eye doth not hinder the affection of the heart in reading ſuch things as God hath appointed to be read; he that giveth the Word to be read, can give the affections to reade it withall, and hath promiſed ſo to doe, which the ſonnes of men that give us preſcript formes of prayer to be read cannot doe.

Diſc. *Whatſoever hath the true matter and forme of prayer, is truely and properly prayer; but a preſcript forme of prayer, ſound, and fit for matter; grave, for manner of penning, read as prayer with knowledge, faith, reverence and fervencie of affection, hath the true matter and forme of prayer.*

Anſw. The Argument doth not conclude the *Queſtion* in hand; wee might grant the concluſion without prejudice to the cauſe. for a preſcript forme of prayer may have the true matter, and eſſentiall forme of prayer, and ſo be (for ſubſtance) truly and properly a prayer, and yet not every way an acceptable and lawfull worſhip of God, through defect of ſome circumſtances which may pertaine to externall forme; Baptiſme may be properly and truly baptiſme, as wanting neither true matter nor forme, when it is diſpenced by a Miniſter of the Goſpel to a believer or his ſeed by the dipping or ſprinckling of water upon him, *In the name of the Father, the Sonne and the Holy Ghoſt*, and yet not every way a lawfull worſhip of God, if it be adminiſtred in an outward forme corrupted with the deviſes of men: as with Salt, Creame, Spittle, Croſſe, and the like; ſo is the caſe here; a preſcript forme of prayer may conſiſt of lawfull fit petitions, and be delivered with a faithfull holy humble ſpiririt and ſo be truely and properly prayer, and yet fall ſhort of ſome rule requiſite to be attended to make it a lawfull worſhip of God, to wit, if it be offered to God in a ſtrange tongue or before an Image, or by the helpe of an Image; ſuch as we conceive a preſcript forme of words to be injoyned and impoſed, to be read upon a booke for the Prayers of the Church.

If

If by Matter and Forme be meant not onely Internall and Essentiall forme; but externall also. Then we deny that a prescript forme of prayer injoyned to be read upon a Booke, is a lawfull externall forme of prayer; no more then a prescript forme of Homilies is a lawfull externall forme preaching; These Answers seeme to us sufficient and unavoidable, and we rest in them; but the other Answers which are alledged by you in your Discourse, and much and often beaten upon by you, though it was delivered by one, whose workes praise him in the gates, throughout all the Churches of the Saints; yet we doe not insist upon it, as not willing to turne aside to unnecessary disputes, stinted set formes wee doe not looke at, as lawfull to them that need them; but unlawfull to them that need them not: For though there be a good use of the distinction in this case (as wee shall see anon) yet not in this case where the necessitie ariseth not from Gods Commandement, but from the sinfull defect of the Creature, for supply whereof God hath ordained sufficient helpe other wayes. 2. *Answ.*

But yet in reply which you make to the Answer, you give a distinction liable to the same exception which your selfe take against that Answer: For that Answer consisting of a distinction of arbitrary and necessary helpe.

Your Discourse rejecteth it as a distinction not grounded upon the Word of God, which in Divinitie is (as you say) *an unwritten tradition, and is this distinction of your owne any better?*

Helps say you and furtherances in Gods Service, are of two sorts, some in nature and use, the same with the true worship of God, instituted by his highnesse, and these are unlawfull, because they are devised; and others concerne the Method, Phrase, of Speech, outward manner of celebration onely as meere circumstances, and these are not forbidden.

A distinction ungrounded upon the Word, and so no better than an unwritten tradition, and withall both the parts imply a false head; for a prayer which a Minister deviseth for his owne, and his peoples use, before the Sermon, is in nature and use the same with the true worship of God instituted by his highnesse; yet it is no unlawfull, because it is devised, for it is devised by him, who is called of God to devise and indite it, as *David* did, *Psal.* 45. *v.* 1. and all the rest; and that by helpe of the Spirit of prayer: againe, on the other part, a prescribed Homilie doth conserve the method, phrase of speech, outward manner of celebration, onely as a meere circumstance; yet no word of God ever allowed it to be read for the publike preaching of the Word unto the people. *Answ.*

It is true which the *Discourse* speaketh of the *Method* of Sermons, devised or studied by such as preach them, there may be some liberty, whether to preach by doctrine, reason and use, or some other way, the like may be said of forms of *Catechismes*, *Blessings*, and *Baptismes*: But the reason of this liberty is because we finde in *Scripture* severall forms of all these, and therefore we limit or prescribe no set formes to any; *Pauls* Epistle to the *Romans* is carried along by Doctrine, reasons and uses, and so are sundry more of his Epistles. But Christs Sermon on the *Mount*, Is carried in another *Method*: *The Apostles Catechise is of one forme*, Heb. 6. 1, 2. *Davids, of another*, Psal. 34. 11, 12, 13, 14. *The Priests Blessings were of one forme*, Numb. 6. 23. to 26. *The Apostles Blessings of another*, 2Cor. 12. 13. 2 Thes. 3. 17, 18. Heb. 13. 20, 21. Jude 24. 25. *The formes of baptizing did also sometimes vary, some using the words of our Saviour*, Math. 28. 19. *Others another forme of words*, Acts 19. 5. The thing is this, where God hath used variety of forms, he leaveth us at liberty to use that one forme or the other; But to gather a liberty to prescribe and limit a set forme of any of these, where God hath not limited, is to pervert and abuse the power of the keyes of Christs Kingdome: to witt, to bind where Christ looseth, but your *Objection* is (as you say) answered by others, and that more safely.

Disc. *That mens inventions in the service of God are forbidden in the second Commandement: But Booke-Prayer is an Invention of men?*

To this your *Discourse* replyeth by retorting upon a former *Answer*, which wee said afore, wee did not make use of in this case.

You reply againe the *Objection* it selfe is of no weight, for by this reason all set formes of *Catechismes*, studied *Sermons*, Interpretations of *Scripture*, divisions of it into *Sections* and *Chapters*, reading one part this weeke, and another the next, conceived prayer it selfe may be disallowed.

Answ. Touching set formes of *Catechisme*, wee do willingly approve dilligent attendance to the *Catechizing* of youth, and *Novices* in any forme tending to Edification, but to devise and prescribe a set forme of words, wherein all the *Questions* and *Answers* shall runne, and no other; wee know no warrant for that from *Scripture*, if God would have his people limited to a set forme of words in catechizing. he would himselfe have prescribed some set forme of his owne inspiration, which might be defective in no principles, nor incommodious in any expression.

2. What though there might be some colour to put a set forme of words of catechisme into the mouths of Children and Novices

ees, the better to helpe their memory and capacities; will it therfore argue it to be a reasonable service of God, to put a set forme of words and prayers, into the mouths of Ministers to help their memories and capacities, in powring out their owne and the Churches Petitions unto God.

Studied *Sermons* are of another nature, it is an Ordinance of God that *Sermons* should be studied, before preached, *Iude* made it his whole studie, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν to write his Epistle *Iude* 3. How much more ought we to make it our whole study to preach: who are not so immediatly inspired. *Solomon* gave good heed and sought out to finde and set in order fit words and matter for the edification of the people, *Eccles.* 12. 9. 10. and behold lesse then *Solomon* are Ministers here, though in respect of the cleare discerning the Mysteries of Christ, *The least in the Kingdom of God is greater then hee*, *Timothy* is exhorted to give attendance to reading, Meditation, Doctrine, to meditate thereon, to give himselfe wholly to them that his profiting might appeare to all: That he might shew himselfe approved unto God: A workeman that needeth not to be ashamed, 1 *Tim.* 4. 13. 14, 15. with 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. But give me leave to speake without offence: You seeme to me in this point to take too much liberty, in a serious cause to play upon equivocation: It is true, in studying a Sermon the Preacher useth his Invention and Judgement. And in that sence his Sermon may be called mans Invention: But you are not ignorant, wee speake in this cause of such Inventions of men, as God hath given neither Commandement nor direction for in his Word; In which sence a studied Sermon is no more a mans Invention, then a studied answer, which *Solomon* commendeth as a path of the Righteous, *Prov.* 15. 28. The like may be said of the next instance, which is, *Interpretation of Scriptures*, as also, *a conceived Prayer*: Interpretation of *Scripture* is from a spirituall gift, which God hath given, and commanded to be used for the edification of his Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. *Nehem.* 8. 8. So is Prayer conceived from a spirit and gift of prayer, which is to be used also and attended to, as a principall part of the Ministeriall office, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. *Acts* 6. 4.

If it be said, but I may take an Interpretation, or Translation of Scripture from others, and therefore a forme of Prayers from others also? *Object.*

There is a broad difference betwixt an Interpretation of *Scripture* as it is put for translation of *Scripture*, and read prayer, for reading of *Scripture* in the Church is an ordinance of God; so is the reading of it in a tongue which the people understandeth, and therefore it is an ordinance of God that the Word be read in some translation. *Answ.* 1.

But

But the reading of a prayer, for the prayers of the Church is no ordinance of God therefore there is not the like ground from the Word to make use of *Prayer-books* to read prayers as to make use of a printed Bible for the reading of the Word.

2. Every Minister that hath understanding of the originall languages wherein the *Scripture* was written out to make use of his own gift in examining the truth of the translation which he readeth unto the Church, which will not be allowed in prescript *Lyturgies:* As for the division of Scriptures into *Sections* and *Chapters*, and the reading of one part this *Weeke*, and the other next; It is certaine, division of *Scripture* is antient, even from the times of the *Prophets*: And evident it is, the whole Scripture cannot bee read over in one day: And therefore it is from God, that some divisions of Scriptures be observed according to the variety of matter therein contained, and distinctly devideth it selfe, and consequently it is from God, that one part of it be read at this Assembly another at the next, becaus all cannot be read at once.

And yet we know no warrant that one Church should prescribe another, what division to make of the Scriptures, or what part of it should be read this day, and what the next, what God hath left free let no man limit.

Disc. *Preaching is commanded of God, so is interpretation of Scripture, but Phrase and Method of Interpretation is of men: The matter of the Scripture is the immediate Word of God, but the Word and Phrase, which are Vessels to convey this truth to us (I speake of Translations not of the Originall Text) are humane and not of God, by immediate Inspiration, God commandeth us to call upon him, both in publique and private, but the words in which wee expresse our desires, are our owne, both in conceived and stinted Prayer.*

Answ. It is true, preaching of the Word and the Interpretation of the Word, are of God, but the phrase and Method is of men, yet so of men as they have commandement and warrant from God, to preach and interprete the Word: and not in what phrase and Method pleases themselves: nor in such words as mans wisdome teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth 1 *Cor.* 2. 13. Nor so from men as that the men of one Church may devise a set forme thereof, and binde all men, as well of other Churches as their owne, to this or that manner of phrase, or Method, the like is to be said of prayer also.

But when your *Discourse* saith, that the words wherein wee expresse our desires are our owne in conceived and stinted prayer, you might as well have said, that the words wherein wee deliver

deliver our Sermons are our own; both in conceived Sermons, and in ſtinted *Homylies*.

These two kinds of Prayer (conceived and ſtinted) agree in their Author, Matter, Forme, Object, end, and common nature; the one is no more an Invention of man then the other; ſo then deviſed Worſhip is unlawfull but not a worſhip in a forme of words deviſed. *Diſc.*

And ſo might we ſay of prayer to God before an Image, and prayer without an Image; they are two kinds of prayer that agree in their Author, matter, forme, object, end, and common nature, yet we cannot ſay the one is more an invention of men then the other: As deviſed Worſhip is unlawfull, ſo are deviſed formes, and meanes of worſhip unlawfull alſo: of which ſort ſuch ſetform of words be as are deviſed and compoſed by the officers of one Congregation, and impoſed upon the Brethren of another Congregation, for the formes of their prayers. *Anſw.*

Wee cannot ſay (as you do) that ſuch conceived and ſtinted forms agree in their Authors, for I am not the Author of the matter of that prayer which another man compoſed, and was the Author of, and is now ſtinted and preſcribed to mee; no more then I can be ſaid to be the Author of that Sermon which another man indited. *Battyllus* was not the Author of *Virgills* Verſes. *Anſw. 2.*

Though he reſiteth them as his own, *Virgill* juſtly challengeth his owne out of his hand, *Hos ego verſiculas feci, &c.* Nor can we ſay that ſuch conceived or ſtinted forms, agree in their forme, if by forme be meant externall forme, it is not the ſame forme of walking to walke with Crutches, and to walke upright: It is not the ſame forme of prayer, to pray with helpe of mens inventions, and with ſuch helps onely as the Holy Ghoſt ſupplyeth: which alſo hindereth that they cannot be ſaid to agree in their common nature; The one being a lawfull forme of prayer, the other unlawfull; And therefore when your Diſcourſe ſaith, that conceived and ſtinted prayer, the one is no more the invention of man then the other, wee cannot underſtand the truth of that: for in conceived prayer, the ſpirit of God within us teacheth us what to pray: And for that the Ordinance and Word of God is plaine, *Rom.* 8. 26. But in ſtinted prayer the matter is not ſuggeſted or indited to us by the ſpirit of God within us, but preſcribed and impoſed upon us, by the will, wiſdome and authority of men; whom the Holy Ghoſt hath not called to ſuch a worke, as therefore a deviſed worſhip is unlawfull; ſo it is unlawfull to worſhip God in a forme of words, deviſed by the Officers of one Congregation, and preſcribed and impoſed upon others.

Disc. *Nay (saith your Discourse) for the forme of words is not Worship, but the Prayer tendered in that forme.*

Answ. As Prayer is Worship, so the forme in which prayer is offered to God, is *Modus*, or *Medium Cultus*, the manner, or means, or help of Worship: which if it be not warranted, and instituted of God, it is forbidden in the second *Commandement*: when God forbad his people to worship him in such a manner, as the *Gentiles* served their Gods, he ordained them a rule to be perpetually observed in all service to him, to wit, that we should worship him as himselfe hath commanded, which the opposition inferreth, that his meaning is not onely with such duties, but in such a manner as himselfe hath commanded, without adding ought thereto, or taking ought therefrom, 12 *Deut.* 30. 31, 32. *Now hee hath commanded us to pray in the spirit*, Eph. 6. 18. which implies not onely with such affections as his spirit kindleth and stirreth up, but also with such matter and words as his spirit helpeth us unto: For his spirit is said to helpe us what to pray, which else we should not know, *Rom.* 8. 26 now in a stinted prescript forme of prayer, we know what to pray without the spirit; when we joyne in prayer with another who is our mouth to God, though we know what to pray by his helpe, yet it is such an help as the spirit himselfe hath provided, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16.

Disc. *It followeth in the* Discourse, *that mens inventions in Gods worship that be of the same nature and use with true worship, or with meanes of worship ordained by God, be unlawfull; but method, phrase, order, of speech devised by man, was never judged an invention of man unlawfull.*

Answ. 1. This hath beene alledged, and answered before, but this further let me adde, 1. That the words imply, that mens inventions that be not of the same nature and use with the worship of God, or with the meanes thereof are lawfull; whereas it is evident that the making of perfume like unto the incense of the Tabernacle, though not to the same use in Gods worship, but to smell at, was rejected of God as utterly unlawfull, *Exod.* 30. 38. The making of like things to the ordinances of God or to the meanes of worship, though not to the like end, but to any religious end, will not be allowed in the second Commandement, as *Gideons* Ephod declareth.

2. These set forms of prayer prescribed to the Churches, we see not but that they are of the same nature, and enjoyned for the same use, for which any formes of prayer in Scripture are ordained of God; and therefore by the verdict of your *Discourse* they are unlawfull: For as those formes of prayer in Scripture are given of God

God to supply the Church with fit matter for their petitions, and praises upon sundry occasions;

And for the use to the edification of the Church: so the formes now in question are of the like nature, given to the like end, only injoyned with more strictnesse and severity, which maketh both their use lesse profitable, and their burthen more heavie, then Gods owne institutions:

Method, phrase and order of speech devised by men, was judged an unlawfull invention by *Paul*, when such wisedome of words in preaching become not the simplicity of the Gospell, 1 *Cor.* 2. therefore it cannot be said, that method, phrase and order of speech devised by man, was never judged an unlawfull invention; and surely method, phrase, order of speech devised, and prescribed by one Congregation to another in prayer, doth as little beseeme liberty and purity of the Gospell, as the other in preaching did ill become the simplicity of the Gospell. 3.

Set prayer is no strange manner of worship, because in it all things required to the nature of true prayer may be observed. *Dise.*

This hath beene answered before; more goeth to the lawfulnesse of a prayer then the nature of true prayer; defect in any circumstance, though but in externall forme, maketh a prayer unlawfull. *Answ.*

In what method and frame of speech to pray, we finde nothing prescribed of God in particular; neither doe wee judge any thing necessary, more then that order, decency, and edification be regarded. *Dise.*

Be it so, but how then shall men have power to prescribe to the Churches method and forme of speech in prayer, when God hath prescribed nothing. The Apostles, who had the largest and highest Commission of any Church governors in the new Testament, yet they had no power to teach, or to prescribe to the Churches any other things then what Christ had commanded them, *Matth.* 28. 19. 20. Say not; though no other things, yet Church governours may command such and such manner of those things; for then a further Commission must be showne, where Christ gave to his Apostles, or their successors power to ordaine and prescribe such and such manner of the administration of his holy things, as themselves should see good. *Answ.*

But we never saw any such commission held forth to this day from any colour of Scripture light; that onely place, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. which is alledged in this case, is farre off from reaching forth any such authority; for though the place doe show that it is the duty of the *Church* to administer all the holy things of God, in order and decency, and to edification, and to see that all things

be so carried; yet it doth not give to the *Church* any such power as to make orders, or to ordaine formes of decency, or to devise meanes of edification, which himselfe hath not ordained; the *Church* may indeed appoint such orders, the neglect whereof would be disorderly and confusion, as they may appoint one Prophet to speake at once; and when another is called to begin the first to hold his peace, because the neglect hereof would breed confusion: The *Church* may appoint such decencies, the neglect whereof would be undecent; as for men to pray bare-headed, and women covered, because the contrary were uncomely by the light of nature, and civill custome; The *Church* may appoint, and ought to use such helps and meanes to edification, as the Lord hath instituted to that end; but if the *Church* goe beyond the bounds of this power they doe at once both exceed the bounds of Apostolicall authority, and cut short the bounds of Christian liberty.

Disc. *A set forme of prayer is for substance and nature agreeable to the rules of direction delivered in the word of truth, though for method and word it be humane, as conceived prayer is.*

Answ. A set forme of prayer, as it is set by one Congregation for another, can finde no rule of direction, nor any footstep thereof in the word of truth.

In saying that for method and words, a set forme of prayer is humane, as conceived prayer is; there is the like liberty taken of Sophistry, in an equivocation, which was observed before; for though a conceived prayer may be said to be humane, as it is conceived and indited in the heart of a man, and by man offered as worship to God (as all other holy duties be in this sense humane) yet such a conceived prayer being indited by the Spirit of God in the heart of him that prayeth, and being expresly commanded in the word; it cannot be truly called an humane invention, which is onely spoken of those things as have neither commandement, nor patterne from the Word, in which sense we call a set forme humane.

Disc. *If our brethren dispaire not of the goodnesse of their cause; let them in an orderly Treatise set downe what is necessary and essentially required, to the nature and being of true prayer, and then shew that some one or other of them cannot be observed in a stinted or prescript forme of prayer, and we will readily yeeld unto them; and some reason or pregnant place of Scripture, shall put us to silence.*

Answ. We see no cause to dispaire of the goodnesse of the cause, which we conceive is not ours but Gods; we choose rather to bewaile the sinfulnesse of our former course, then eagerly to dispute for

our present proceedings; we all of us have sinned with our brethren, and with our fathers in worshipping God after the precepts of men, and have as much cause to judge our selves for it, as you have: To write a Treatise of all the requisites to true prayer, is nothing to the standing or falling of the cause.

As hath beene said, prayer may be true, and have all those things which are necessary and essentially requisite to true prayer, and yet sinfully defective in some externall circumstances: It were much more pertinent to write a Treatise of the third Commandement, whereunto the consideration of the helps and forms of worship doth properly belong; and from thence to consider whether any sound reason at last (which you desire) may not be inferred against prescript formes of prayer.

Let us therefore consider together of the meaning of that *Commandement*, though not in the full latitude of it (for that were not so pertinent to the cause in hand) but so farre as concerneth the present businesse; and yet not seeking thereby, nor striving to put you to silence, but to awaken both our selves and you (if it be the will of God) to repentance.

The second *Commandement*, in forbidding Images, forbiddeth not onely bodily Images, (graven or molten, or painted) but all spirituall Images also; which are the imaginations and inventions of men, whether they be ordained for worship (as *Apocrapha* Scriptures and the lawes of men binding the conscience) or for helps and meanes of worship (as significant ceremonies, to teach and stirre up to spirituall duties) or finally, for formes, and manner of worship, yet when we speake of helps and means of worship invented by men, and forbidden by God, in this Commandement we doe not speake either of naturall or artificiall helps, to helpe the naturall sense in Gods worship; (such as scaffolds be to men hearing) nor of the helps of tongues and arts which the wisedome of God hath given for an help to the mind and understanding in all knowledge: As if God commanded the people to read in his Word all their dayes, and to read with understanding the translation of Scripture into the mother-tongue of each nation, is a necessary help to this end, and the knowledge of Grammer, and tongues is a necessary help to such a translation.

And so if God command the people to joyne together, as well in voyce as in heart, to sing *Psalmes*, and to sing them with understanding, singing *Psalmes* are a kind of holy Poetry, even as Grammer will be a necessary helpe to translate the *Psalmes* into *English*; So Poetry will be requisite to translate the *English* into

verſe, and ſuch kind of helps, though they be not expreſſely commanded by God, yet we looke at them as warranted by neceſſary conſequence from the Word; becauſe God, who commanded the duties of reading the Scripture and ſinging of *Pſalmes*, (and both to be done with underſtanding) he doth imply a neceſſary warrant of ſuch meanes as doe naturally and neceſſarily lead to thoſe ends, and without which thoſe ends (without a miracle) cannot be obtained.

We ſpeake therefore of ſuch meanes and helps of worſhip forbidden in this Commandement, notwhich do naturally and neceſſarily helpe forward the ſame (though remotely) but of ſuch Arbitrary helps, as are voluntarily taken up by the wiſdome and will of man for ſpirituall ends, (as *Gideons* Ephod and *Phariſaicall* waſhings: and ſuperadded to thoſe means and helps of worſhip; which God hath ſufficiently, yea, and abundantly ſupplyed, his Church and people withall, by his Word and Spirit, for all ſpirituall duties.

Nevertheleſſe, this diſtinction of voluntary and neceſſary helps, may not be ſtretched ſo farre, as to juſtifie deviſed and ſet formes of prayer, to ſupply the defects of finfully ignorant, or careleſſely baſhfull people, as cannot pray (eſpecially before company) without a Booke: For, firſt, God would not have ſuch perſons (ſo ſinfully ignorant and baſhfull) to be called forth into publique Miniſtery; the lame and the blind ſhall not come into *Sion*; into *Davids* Houſe, 2 *Sam.* 5. 8. nor may ſuch ignorant and lame Chriſtians be admitted to come into the publike place in the Church.

3. God hath provided other ſufficient helps to ſupply theſe defects to private Chriſtians: for beſides the ſpirit of God (which helps all our *in*firmities, *Rom.* 8. 26.) who ſupplieth both the ignorant with knowledge of what, and how to pray, and the baſhfull with power; hee hath alſo ordained inſtruction to helpe the ignorant, and frequent exerciſe, and diligent Catechiſing of a mans owne family, to helpe his baſhfulneſſe in praying before them; and if ſtrangers come in (and they fit to partake in ſuch an ordinance) God then offered him the help of a Chriſtian friend to ſupply his neceſſity before ſtrangers; and when we ſpeake of forme, and manner of worſhip deviſed by men; we ſpeake not of ſuch as light of nature and civill cuſtome taketh up for order and decencie; but of ſuch as are taken up by the voluntarie choice of the wiſedome and will of man, either for ſuch ends as God hath not appointed (as uniformity in Rites, and conformity to Idolaters) or for ſuch ends, as for which

God

God hath provided otherwise; as the Love feasts in the *Church* to maintaine brotherly love, for which God ordained the Lords Supper, and feasts in private houses: or contrary to such ends and wayes as God hath appointed, as the *Chemarines* to offer incence, (a type of prayer) to maintaine a praying Ministery, without sacrificing; as a read Liturgie to maintaine a reading or praying Ministery without preaching.

It was touched upon before that, when God forbad us such a manner of worship, as *Heathens* use to their god, and against that one false manner of worship, establisheth his owne institutions in his word (*Deut.* 12. 80. 91. 82.) Hee doth thereby evidently condemne under one false manner of worship all other formes or manners of worship, which are not instituted in his word. Hence conformity to Idolaters in cutting their haire and beards is forbidden, *Levit.* 19. 27. Hence preaching in the wiledome of words, (or in carnall eloquence) is forbidden: as a painted Image against the second *Commandement*, 1 *Cor.* 21. Hence prayer towards the East falleth under the same reproofe: hence the incense of *Vzzia*, the strange fire of *Nadab* and *Abihu*; the striking of the rocke by *Moses* in the wilderneſse of sinne; the Love feasts brought into the Lords Supper.

And many more such like formes and manners of Gods worship are forbidden in the Word, as divers from the rule and patterne held forth in the second Commandement, as it is opened and illustrated by these and such like examples in the writings of the Prophets, and Apostles: we are not ignorant that there is also a sinfull forme & manner of worship which is forbiden in the 3d. *Commandement*, as when wee worship God unreverently, or drousily. but that is rather *Rō. modus colendus*, then *modus cultus*.

To apply then to this Rule and Commandement of God these set formes of prayer devised by men, and prescribed to be read out of a Booke, and so taken up by one Church from another, as the forms of their worship, and the helps of their devotion: Wee finde no Commandement nor Patterne for them in the Word; nor any promise for their acceptance; They are injoyned for helpes, and means of Gods worship; which God hath not sanctified, and for forms of worship, which God hath not acknowledged, and therefore we know not how to excuse them from sinne, against the true meaning of the second *Commandement*.

If it be said that it was granted, before in stating the Question, that in reading a Prayer penned by another man (say one of Calvins *Prayers after his Lectures) a man may be so affected with it, as that his heart going along* Object.

along therewith, he may convey his own desires, and Petitions to God in reading thereof, and so make it his own prayer, though devised by another, and read out of a Booke.

Answ. Wee grant that a man may make use of another mans penned prayers read in private, not onely for an example, or instruction how to pray; but also occasionally for his present prayer; If he finde the Petitions sutable to his present occasions: Yea, wee grant further, that in case one Church should send letters to another Church, and in the end thereof should conclude with some prayer sutable to the state of the Church to whom they rite; we doubt not that the Church to whom the letters are sent, finding the Petitions sutable to their condition, may lawfully go along therewith in spirit, and in the end say *Amen* thereto, and so make it their own prayer.

But yet here bee two things different from the case in hand.

1. They that penned such prayers did not prescribe them as forms of prayer for the brethren to use, left them freely to their liberty.

Secondly, they that take them up occasionally for their present use, and make them their prayers, they do not set them a part to be read for their ordinary prayers, either in publique or in private, which seemeth to us a matter of weighty consideration, and maketh a great difference in the cause in hand. to cleare it by a familiar instance: A man passing through a burying place may see a dead mans scalpe cast up, and thereby take occasion from the present object to meditate (for the present) on his mortallity, and to prepare for like change: but if he shall take up, and keepe that dead mans scalpe in his Closet, or Bed-chamber, to be an ordinary helpe to him, to put him in minde dayly of his mortality: Now in so doing he maketh an Image of it, to himselfe, by setting it a part to be an helpe to him in Gods worship; which not being sanctified and set a part by God for that end, it now becomes a sinne to him against the second Commandement in the former case, he tooke occasion to fall into a present good meditation of mortality, by the present sight of an object of mortality, as it was set before him occasionally by Gods providence; wherein he did well according to the 2d. *Commandement*, not to passe by such a passage of Gods providence in vaine: But in the latter case, in setting it a part to be an ordinary helpe to him in such meditations, or injoyning the same to others; He in so doing maketh it to him and them an Image, it not being instituted, or sanctified by God, but devised and set a part by man for such a spirituall end, which is forbidden in the second *Commandement*.

If it be said againe, when I reade prayer and finde some

Petitions

Petitions therein that sute well with my estate I may not onely then use them for my present prayer, but may againe and againe ordinarily make use thereof in my own prayers.

Wee deny not that, but it is one thing to take up a Petition, or two, or more, and to interfert them here and there into mine owne prayers, and another thing to take up a whole intire prayer, or forme of prayer, and use it ordinarily as mine owne; see the like in preaching, I may make use of a sentence or two, or more, here and there, out of another mans Sermon, and it may be inculcate the same againe and againe, in many Sermons together of mine owne; But I may not therefore take up a whole Sermon penned by another, and preach it for mine own, though it were never so fit for my text, and for mine owne *Congregation*. *Answ.*

Whence also another reason (and in our apprehension of just weight) may be alledged against the ordinary use of set formes of prayers devised by others, If every Minister be to edifie the Church by the dispensation of his own tallents, and gifts, as well in prayer as in preaching: Then he may not pray another mans penned prayer, no more then preach another mans penned Sermon, but the former is true 1 *Cor.* 12. 17. *Acts* 6. 4. *Eph.* 4. 8. 11, 12, 13. therefore the latter. 2.

Let me adde a third reason, If I may worship God in the *congregation* with a set forme of prayer, read out of a booke; then I may bring into the Church another Booke besides the Booke of God, to be read ordinarily for the publique edification of the Church: But wee know no warrant for the use of any booke in the Church to be read ordinarily for the publique edification of the Church, besides the booke of God; to bring into the Church any other booke besides Gods, is like the bringing in of another *Altar* into the Temple of the Lord, and set it up besides the *Altar* of the Lord: which did in time thrust the *Altar* of the Lord to stand behinde, and give place, and at length to be laid a side, 2. *Kings* 16. 14. 15. I need not apply it, experience goeth far enough in applying of it, If it be an unsanctified way of preaching to fill a Sermon with *Quotations* out of the Bookes of antient Divines (whom more commonly then safely they call Fathers) though the sentences be godly, and pithy, how much more will it be an unsanctified kinde of prayer, to make up not only many Petitions together but also a whole forme of Prayer out of a booke, lesse antient, and much more offensive. 3.

Let me conclude with a fourth reason, and adde no more in this place; He that selecteth a few prayers which in themselves are free from offensive matter out of a book lyable (in the whole 4.

bulke) to many juſt exceptions, and withall impoſed by one Church upon another, hee doth really therein hold forth and profeſſe his ſubjection (not onely to the irregular exerciſe of that authority whereby it is injoyned) but alſo to the whole order of worſhip injoyned in that booke; as *Paul* in practiſing (though but ſeldome) a few ceremonies out of the booke of the Law, did therein hold forth and profeſſe his orderly walking according to the whole Law, and his profeſſed ſubjection to the whole order of worſhip preſcribed by the authoriy of the Law, *Act.* 21. 24. 26. which had it not beene warranted by God himſelfe for a ſeaſon, he had doubtleſſe thereby ſinned againſt the ſecond *Commandement*. Since then the ſecond *Commandement* is ſo many wayes violated by reading of a prayer booke, deviſed and preſcribed by humane authority, for the publique prayers of the Church, the Lord pardon all our provocations of his jealouſie by our former ignorance in this point, and keepe us blameleſſe, for after times, for his holy names ſake, in Jeſus Chriſt.

You know the ſinnes againſt this *Commandement*, doe more provoke the jealouſie of the Lord againſt his people, and that for many generations, then the breach of any of the reſt, which is the reaſon why the Lord ſetteth before his people (as a flaming ſword) his jealouſie, for a ſanction and fence of this *Commandement* above the reſt, *Exod.* 20. 5. And ſhall we then provoke the Lord to jealouſie, are we ſtronger then hee? but let us proceed with our Diſcourſe.

Diſc. *They tell us* (ſay you) *God hath not ordained a ſet preſcript worſhip; he hath not indeed preſcribed it as neceſſary, but his Word doth warrant it to us as lawfull.*

Anſw. Firſt, ſhew us but one Text of the word that doth warrant it as lawfull, any word of precept or promiſe, or patterne from the Scripture, and wee ſhall doe as you offer to doe, ſit downe in ſilence.

Secondly, if God have not preſcribed a ſet forme as neceſſary, why is ſuch neceſſity put upon all the Churches, for receiving of it, hath the Church power to bind where God looſeth?

Diſc. *Touching the externall forme of words, in which we ſhould profer our Petitions, we know nothing preciſely commanded by the Lord, and therefore judged it a thing merely indifferent whether our requeſts be read or uttered; whether in a ſtinted or conceived forme of words; neither doe we bring in any ſtrange manner of prayer; for in ſubſtance the prayer read, and conceived is all one.*

Anſw. Firſt, touching the externall forme of words in prayer, we may know (and muſt willingly know what the word hath taught

taught us) that the Lord hath commanded (whether expressely or by just consequence, all is one) :

First, that as in preaching, so consequently in prayer, we are to expresse our mindes in such a frame of words, not which mans wisdome teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghost* teacheth, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13.

Secondly, that we are not to worship God after the precepts, or patternes of men, but doe all things after the patterne in the mount, *Esay* 29. 13. *Deut.* 12. 30. 31, 32. *Heb.* 8. 5.

Thirdly, that we should not worship God in an Image, devised by man, and such are all set formes of prayer, devised helps of worship, and prescribed to be read in the Chuch of Christ.

But suppose (as the *Discourse* presumeth) that it were a thing meerely indifferent, whether our requests be read, or uttered, whether in a stinted or conceived forme of words, It seemeth to us a manifest transgression of the bounds, both of Apostolicall authority, and Christian liberty, to bring in or take up a forme of prayer stinted and limitted by men, which is left to us indifferent by God ; nor can we excuse a read prayer prescribed by men, from a strange forme of prayer ; seeing no such forme is read or heard of, in all the Scripture ; so great a difference is there betwixt a conceived, and a prescribed read prayer, as is betweene the fire from the Altar and the strange fire ; the one is an ordinance of God, the other is an imagination of men. *Answ.* 2.

CHAP. III.

Wherein Answer is returned to Reason the second.

If it be lawfull to use a prescript forme of blessing, prayer, thanksgiving, and baptising set downe in the Word of God, Then all prescript formes of prayer or liturgie, are not to be condemned ; but the former appeareth from Numb. 6. 22. 23. 22 Psal. 102. 1. Hos. 14. 2. 3. *Ioel* 2. 17. *Deut.* 5. 10. Psal. 92. 1. Esra. 3 10. Rev. 15. 3. 2 Chron. 29. 30. Isay 12. 1. Matth. 28. 19. *What answer doe our Brethren returne to this Argument ?* *Disc.*

Our answer is ready, and plaine, just and short, wee deny both the Major proposition, and the ground of the Minor ; for (to speake first to the former) it doth not follow that prescript forme of prayer invented by men is lawfull, because a forme prescribed of God is good and allowable ; the Reason whereof is sound and evident ; though God forbid men to make themselves any Image, or likenesse in his worship, yet he hath not forbid- *Answ.*

den himselfe this power to prescribe an Image or forme to us; hee appointed his people to make the Cherubims, to worship him before them, both in the Tabernacle and Temple; but yet when *Ieroboam* made to himselfe the like forme at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and prescribed them to the people, it was a manifest breach of the second Commandement; what reply doth the Discourser returne to this.

Disc. *A meere shift (say you) instead of an answer: for the question is not of this or that forme in particular, but of a prescript forme in it selfe considered; the Lords Prayer was indited, or prescribed by our saviour himselfe, and they yet deny the use thereof as a prayer, and most of the Reasons which they bring, doe conclude against every set forme of prayer, as well as against any one; thus they argue: If a set forme of prayer be lawfull, then a man may carry his prayers in his pocket; buy them at the Booke binders shops, &c. and doth not this Reason disallow all penned and printed formes as well as ours?*

Answ. Thus, with one sudden and blunt dash of a pen, a holy and divine truth confirmed by plentifull evidence of Scripture, and applied generally and frequently by our best Divines against Popish Images, is at once blotted out, and branded as a shift: I say no more but this; This is a speaking evill of the Law, and condemning of the Law, and that in a higher degree then that which is reproved by the Apostle *Iames, Chap.* 4. 11. for the Law it selfe in condemning Images, and the imaginations of mens devising, commandeth and establisheth the Images and imaginations ordained by God.

Therefore for you to call such a distinction of Images, as is established by the Law of God, a meere shift, is to make your selfe (pardon my plainnesse) in this case, not an observer of the Law, but a Judge; so farre will inordinate zeale to a way of error transport even godly mindes.

But to speake to the grounds of such a censure, though it were granted that the question is not of this or that forme of prayer in particular, yet it is of a set forme devised by men, and prescribed to be read out of a booke for an ordinary prayer; yea, I might adde further that the occasion of the *Question* in hand, springeth from an offence taken at some brethren (as appeareth by the letters sent to us about this matter, by sundry Reverend godly brethren, and subscribed amongst others, by your owne name) for their not joyning with others to worship God in a common stinted liturgie, known to be devised by men, and prescribed to be read for the publique prayers of all the Churches in the countrey; howsoever therefore the question be reduced by your Discourse

courses *ab Hypothesi, ad Thesin* (and by lawfull rules of dispute so may be) yet it is against the rule, Μεταβαινειν εἰς ἄλλο γενος, so to palliate the matter, as to draw the question above the kinde, and occasion of the question; you may upon occasion of one prescript forme of prayer, devised by men, put the question of any prescript forme of prayer devised by men; but it is an utter changing and forsaking of the cause to put off the question in hand to formes of prayer devised and prescribed by God; what though some that have spoken or written in this cause, have waved some formes of prayer devised by God himselfe; and have used some arguments, that graspe at more then they can hold?

The state of the question must not be drawne to the arguments, but the arguments to the state of the question; It is true, some have doubted, and some have denyed the use of the Lords Prayer (as it is called) for a Prayer, but they would never have denyed it or doubted of it, if they had thought it had been prescribed by Christ for a Prayer: But howsoever (not to spend words and time in vaine) we for our parts (I speake for the most part) do grant it may be lawfull to pray that very Prayer, in the same words, and yet this will not at all prejudize the cause in hand, to justifie Prayers in a Booke composed by men, and imposed by one Church upon another.

Nevertheless, that Argument against such prayers which are fetched from the Topicks of the Pocket, or of the Book-binders Shops, wee neither use, nor allow, they which use them, may cleare their own intentions and drift in them.

Having thus cleared the denyall of the Major proposition, we do as justly deny the ground of the *Minor*, for though it do appeare from *Scripture*, that some formes of prayer, or blessing, or baptising, or thanksgiving devised by God, were sometimes used by godly men (and it was lawfull for them so to do) yet we deny (that which was the ground of the *Minor*) that God in his Word did set downe any prescript forme of any of these: prescript (I say) In such a sence as in this *Question* is intended; to wit, precisely joyning the use thereof in all their publique holy Assemblies: nor will any of the *Scriptures* alledged reach that; in *Numb.* 6. 22, 23. The *Priests* are directed to a forme of blessing: But that they used that and not other formes, doth not appeare: It is evident that the Apostles used divers other formes, as hath beene shewed above, in *Psal.* 22. 1. there is no prescribing of a forme of words at all, onely Christ used the same words, with a little variance upon the like occasion, on the Crosse, or if

you urge the title of the *Psalme*, from *Iunius* his notes, as if the *Psal.* were appointed to be sung every morning by breake of day: Beare with us if we rather fetch the meaning of these words אילת השחר על from the *Psalme* it selfe, *vers.* 19. where the *Prophet* alluding to אילת calleth the Lord אילותי my strength hasten to helpe mee, the words therefore in the title hold forth no more but the Argument of the *Psalme* אילת השחר על for speedy helpe a *Psalme* of *David*, In *Psalm.* 102. 1. the Title sheweth what an afflicted soule in such a case did pray; but doth not prescribe all afflicted soules to powre out the same forme of words in their afflictions. *Hosea*, 14. 2, 3. The *Prophet* directeth them to take words to themselves, to such a purpose: But whether the selfe same words, or some other such like, hee doth not limit or prescribe: The like may be said of *Ioel*, 1. 17. *Deut.* 5. 10. hath nothing sounding towards the point in hand. I suppose it is miswritten by the errour of the Scribe, In *Psal.* 29. 1. the *Psalme* is penned for the *Sabbath*, but whether for a word, of instruction for the *Sabbath*, or for thanksgiving on the *Sabbath* it is not mentioned, we willingly grant it was penned for both; But nevertheless, it was not prescribed every *Sabbath* day to bee sung, In *Ezra.* 3. 10. it doth appeare, as also 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. That they prayed God with the words of *David* and after his Ordinance: But his Ordinance and words were appointed of God 2 *Chron.* 29. 25. And yet not so prescribed to be used as never to be omitted; in *Rev.* 15. 3 when it is said, they sung the Song of *Moses* the servant of God, and the Songe of the *Lambe*; It is only meant, they praised God with *Psalmes* to the like effect as that of *Moses*; not with the same words much lesse upon prescript. *Isa.* 12. 1. It is propheſied the Church shall praise God to such a purpose as these words hold forth; But whether in these very words, is uncertaine, certaine it is, they are not so prescribed to do: but left at libertie. In *Matth.* 29. 19, the place is miswritten, as before.

Obj. *But it suffiseth us that these formes of Blessing and Prayer, might lawfully be used as a blessing, or Prayer, though in conscience they were not necessarily tyed to the use of them: The lawfull, not the necessary use of a prescript forme of prayer (or liberty) is now in question; for if the Saints in former times might pray unto God, or praise him in a stinted forme of words, indited by others, or invented by themselves (as we finde they might and did) we also at this day do the same.*

Answ. Wee deny not that formes of Prayer, and blessings indited by the Holy Ghost in *Scripture*, may be lawfully so used, but we deny that they were prescribed, or limitted to bee so used, but still the

the Church left at liberty to use them, or some other holy formes in their stead; and therefore when the Discourse saith the lawfull, not the necessary use of a prescript forme, is now in question, you make the question to imply a contradiction; for a prescript forme is put upon the Churches, as necessary to be used in all publique holy assemblies, else it is not a forme prescribed, but described onely.

But (saith the Discourser) *If they will heare with patience, the consequence of that argument, The use of a devised, and prescribed forme of prayer will be justified from their owne ground; for they teach that God hath not appointed in his Word any prescript forme, which of necessity we are tyed to use at all; that the matter of our prayers are divers, according to the severall occasions, which hapen and fall out; that the Inward frame is the ellevation of the soule to God, in humility, love, feare and confidence; from which premises it will necessarily follow, if one godly forme of prayer may be used, another also fit for matter, grave for phrase of speech, may be allowed, for none is absolutely commanded.* *Disc.*

The contrary conclusion doth rather follow from the premises; for if none be absolutely commanded by God then none ought to be commanded or prescribed by men; what God hath left free in his worship, let no man limit; To what Church did God ever give power to bind where himselfe looseth? And if it be unlawfull for Church Governours to bind where God looseth, It will be unlawfull for the people so deeply to offend the conscience of their Governours, as to build them up, or to harden them in their sinnes, by ready subjection to such injunctions, and serious and zealous pleading for them: How much safer were it for the people of God, to stand fast in the liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, in accepting no other yoke of ordinances, nor formes of worship then himselfe hath put upon them? that so Church governours might containe themselves within the power in Church affaires, wherein the Lord hath contained himselfe throughout the Scriptures; when shall it once be that the servants of God will learne to be wise, and teach others to be wise, not above that which is written, but according to it, that so an end might be put at length to the inventions and innovations of the sonnes of men, whereby they take upon themselves an usurpation beyond the bounds of Apostolicall Authority, and put upon the people an unjust restraint of the bounds of their deare bought Christian liberty? *Answ.*

The use of a prescript forme of prayer (or Liturgie) derogateth (as some say) *from the honour, fruit and benefit of Christs ascention; who ascending up on high, hath given gifts to men for the worke of the Ministery,* *Disc.*

niſtery, Eph. 4. 8. *Let it be granted that every particular Miniſter is able in ſo full and ample manner at all times to open his heart before God (which can never be proved) as that hee ſhall not need the helpe of a booke; Is there no warrant therefore for others to preſcribe, or for themſelves to reade or uſe ſtinted prayer; why not? an able Miniſter hath diſcretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read; Hath the Church then no power to appoint what Books and Chapters ſhall ordinarily be read; or hath a Miniſter no warrant to obſerve that appointment? A learned Linguiſt is able to tranſlate a Chapter in the old or new Teſtament, peradventure as well as it is tranſlated, may not the Church yet ordaine one uſually to be read?*

Let our brethren judge the ſtrength of their Reaſon, in one framed after the ſame manner; If a Miniſter be indued with gifts, what portion of Scripture is meet to be reade, then is there no warrant for another to preſcribe, nor for them to reade ſtinted portions of Scripture preſcribed by men; prayer is a part of Gods worſhip, ſo is reading of Scripture; the externall forme of words are humane, ſo is the preſcription of ſuch a Booke or Chapter.

Anſw. The Reaſon is of more weight againſt preſcript formes, then will ſo eaſily be caſt off, at leaſt to our beſt apprehenſions; For if the Lord Jeſus by his aſcention hath given ſufficient furniture of gifts to the Miniſters of his Church for prayer, as well as for preaching; For the whole worke of the Miniſtery, for the edification of the Church, For the perfecting of the Saints unto the fulneſſe of the ſtature of the age of Chriſt; Then it is diſhonourable unto Chriſt, and ſuperfluous for the Governours of the Church, to preſcribe unto Miniſters ſet formes of prayer in Liturgies, any more then ſet formes of preaching in Homilies; If Chriſt hath not gifted them as ſufficient for the one as for the other, it doth indeed derogate from the honour and fruit of his aſcention; if he have, then it is ſuperfluous for Church governours, *Actum Agere*, even as much as to tie bladders under the wings of Sea-fowles to keepe them from ſincking, or to helpe them to ſwim; It is true that every good Miniſter is not able at all times to open his heart to God in prayer, but neither is hee able at all times to open the minde of God in preaching, but if he be not able to doe both without booke, neither will hee be able to doe either upon a booke preſcribed to him; I have knowne a Miniſter to edifie the people more by ſilence in the pulpit through ſtrength of temptation, then ever I knew any doe by reading a Homily upon the Booke.

If an able Miniſter have diſcretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read, to what end ſhould the Church appoint

point him what bookes and Chapter to read ordinarily; It is a commendable worke in any state to procure a faithfull translation of the Bible to be extant in the mother tongue of each people under their dominions, for the common benefit of them all. And we doe easily grant a Minister (though he be a learned Linguist) hath liberty not onely to make use of it, in his private studies, but also to make use of it in the Congregation; for seeing reading of Scripture is an ordinance of God; yea, and reading of it in the mother tongue of each people, it will best agree with the edification of each people, to reade it out of such a booke as is frequent and currant in all their hands.

But yet the Church may not so bind him to such a translation, as not to give him leave to amend it, if need bee; and he be able: And besides this will no way reach the binding of Ministers to a set forme of prayer upon a booke; seeing reading of prayers in the Church, as prayers, is not any ordinance of God; as all the reading of translated Scriptures be.

CHAP. IIII.

Answering to the third Reason.

IF it be lawfull to sing Psalms in a forme of words devised by men, then likewise to pray unto God in a stinted forme; If the one of these be an invention of men a strange prayer; a similitude of a prayer: so is the other a similitude of a Psalme. Disc.

First, the singing of *Psalmes* (whereof you speake) in a forme of words devised by men, may have a double meaning: for either you meane such *Psalms* as are compiled by ordinary men, or else *Psalmes* penned by the Prophets; but translated by ordinary men into *English* verse, to be sung in the Churches: If you speake of the former, then this is our first answer: Answ.

We see as little warrant for singing *Apocrypha Psalmes* in the Church, as for praying prescript *Lyturgies* of men in the Church: and for both together, as little warrant as for reading *Apocrypha* Scriptures in the Church; but if you speake of the latter, then our second answer is this: 1.

There is an observable difference betweene singing of *Psalmes* and *Prayer*; as also, betweene the *Psalmes* penned by the Prophets, and by other ordinary men; for in the peoples joyning in prayer, there is no more required but their going along in silence, with consent of the heart, and in the end of the prayer, expressing their consent in voyce, by saying, *Amen*, 1 *Corinth.* 14. 16. But in 2.

singing of *Psalmes*, all the people of God (as spirituall Priests) doe sing with voyce together, according to *Isay* 52. 8. which putteth a necessity upon a set forme of *Psalmes*, else one should sing one thing, and another another thing, which would in stead of harmony, breed confusion; but there is no necessity of a set forme of prayer; for if the words of the Ministers prayers be understood of the people, they goe along and joyne with him in silent consent, as well in a forme conceived for the present occasion; as in a set forme of words, whereunto they have beene accustomed: besides the *Psalmes* penned by the Prophets (as by *David* and the rest) being of divine inspiration, and part of the holy word of God (which we are commanded should dwell in us plenteously, and wherewith we are to teach and admonish our selves and one another by the singing of them unto the Lord) we have therefore a lawfull warrant, to sing such *Psalmes*, even in such a forme of words, as they are translated into by men; when yet wee have not the like warrant to pray the formes of prayer devised by ordinary men, which are not of divine inspiration, but of humane invention and injunction. *Psalmes* and *Scripture* translated are still as truly the Word of God in the translation, as in the originall language.

Dise. *But* (say you) *If a man be at a losse to reason against the singing of Psalmes hee may a great deale more plausibly argument in the infancie of the Church when God saw a set forme to be necessary; he inspired holy men to pen such as might be of use for that time, when such worship was prevented; and therefore seeing at this day, no such formes are given us of God, they are not to be allowed.*

Answ. Such an argument though you thinke it were plausible, yet indeed it is lesse defenceable; for the truth is, set formes of *Psalms* are as necessary now, as they were then; for seeing it is necessary that all the people should joyne in voyce as well as in heart, in the singing of *Psalmes*. It is therefore necessary they should know before hand the same set forme of words in which they should all joyne; and seeing a set forme of words in *Psalmes* is necessary, it pleased the Lord to devise himselfe to our hands a set forme of them by his holy Prophets; who being carried by the Holy Ghost, farre above humane infirmity and possibility of erring; they have set downe such formes as were fit, not only for the infancy of the Church, but for the publique use of all Churches in all ages, and for all occasion, which cannot be said of any compilements devised by ordinary men.

Dise. *But* (say you) *a set forme of words is as necessary in preaching, and publique prayers, as in singing; this or that forme is necessary in neither; a*

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set forme is necessary in both; the people cannot sing with the Minister, unlesse what is sung be represented to them in a set forme of words; nor can they joyne in prayer, or attend to the word preached, unlesse the matter of praying or preaching be conveyed to them in a set forme of words.

Answ. You confound a forme of words understood and a set forme; it is true, no man can joyne in prayer, or attend unto the Word preached, unlesse the matter of prayer or preaching be conveyed in a forme of words understood; but yet without a set forme of words they may, the words being delivered in a knowne tongue: by set formes we understand standing formes such as come to be used againe and againe, day by day in the same words; common sense maketh it evident, men may joyne in prayer, and attend to the Word preached as well in a new forme of words, according to the present occasion, which he never heard before as in a set forme which he heareth every day.

Disc. *But you demand, Is a Minister able to to expresse the necessities of the people, or the doctrine of salvation in a forme of words devised and studied by himselfe; and is he not able by meditation and study, to dictate, and compose a Psalme to be sung by the people, as occasion requireth? and if so, is not a stinted forme of singing devised by men, an arbitrary helpe to him, and so forbidden.*

Answ. 2. Many a good Minister that is able to expresse the necessities of the people or the doctrine of salvation, in a forme of words devised and studied by himselfe; is not able so to dictate and compose a *Psalme* to be sung by the people each severall occasion no, though he should meditate and study hard for it: Poetry is not every good schollers facultie; nor the penning of holy *Psalmes* the skill of every good Minister; nor is it to be required that it should: For seeing the Holy Ghost hath already dictated and composed to our hands divers formes of *Psalmes* for all occasions, it would be superfluous for Ministers to take up their meditations and studies, about the inventing other formes, though they had gifts fit for it; and therefore if such as have the skill to pen *Psalmes*, doe nevertheless sing the formes of *Psalmes* set and composed by *David*, and other Prophets; as they cannot be said therein to make use of the inventions of men, but of Gods institutions; so neither can they be said to sinne upon the other respect, which you mention, because they use an helpe to them not necessary; whereas others that want their skill, doe lawfully use *Davids Psalmes*, because such an helpe to them, is not arbitrary, but necessary; no, no, wee doe not approve of that distinction betweene arbitrary and necessary, in that sense to that purpose; in that sense I say, for I here see you worke upon

an equivocation in this word neceſſary; For there is a double neceſsity ſpoken of in this caſe; a ſet forme of worſhip may be ſaid to be neceſſary, either through ſinfull defects in men, who ſhould be able; but are not to conceive a forme of worſhip of themſelves, or elſe through the nature and condition of the worſhip it ſelfe, which cannot be performed, but in a ſet forme, whatſoever the gifts of men be; in this later ſenſe, not in the former, is the ſinging of *Pſalmes* in a ſet forme neceſſary; for unleſſe a *Pſalme* be expreſſed in a ſet forme of words, and ſo ſet before the people, all the people cannot joyne in voyce (as well as heart) ſinging and praiſing God together in the ſame words; we admit of no neceſsity of any ſet formes of prayer (or other worſhip) in the former ſenſe: as concerning ſuch men unfit to be Miniſters of the Goſpell as want gifts to conceive a prayer according to the preſent occaſion; but a ſet forme of *Pſalmes* we allow as neceſſary in the later ſenſe, as neceſſary (by conſequence) from divine inſtitution; for if ſinging of *Pſalmes* be as it is of divine inſtitution: and if *Pſalmes* be a kinde of ſpirituall Poetry, and therefore to be put into verſe; If it be alſo of divine inſtitution; that all the people ſhould joyne as well in voyce, as in heart, in ſinging of *Pſalmes*; and that in a language knowne, and underſtood by themſelves; then it will be requiſite and neceſſary by divine inſtitutions (for he that inſtituteth the end, inſtituteth the neceſſary meanes that leadeth to the end) that in our *Engliſh* Churches the *Pſalmes* be tranſlated into *Engliſh* verſe, or metre; and received of the Churches in a ſet forme; that ſo all the people may joyne with one voyce and heart to praiſe the Lord together in the ſame words; but there is not the like neceſsity of a ſet forme of words in prayer: For in prayer (as hath beene ſaid) there is no more required of the people then when they heare the words of the Miniſter, to goe along with him in heart; and in the end of the prayer, to anſwer with one accord in voyce, *Amen*. And ſo whatſoever is required of the people by divine inſtitution for joyning in prayer is fully attained, without a ſet forme of words in prayer, which cannot be attained in ſinging without a ſet forme of words in *Pſalmes*.

Diſc. *It is ſaid of prayer, Chriſt hath given gifts to his Miniſters for preaching and praying, hath he not for the ſinging of Pſalmes alſo? If it be a diſhonour to Chriſt (as ſome affirme) that they ſhould uſe a forme of prayer deviſed by others; Is it not a diſhonour likewiſe, if they ſhall uſe a forme of ſinging deviſed by others.*

Anſw. It hath been anſwered above, that though God hath given gifts to his Miniſters for preaching and praying; yet he hath not given

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to many the gift of inditing *psalmes* also; and yet neither is it any dishonour to Christ, nor sinful defect in his *Ministers* that he hath not so furnished them, seeing hee himselfe hath sufficiently furnished them with all set formes of *psalmes* by the Ministery of his Prophets, divinely inspired for the service of the Church; and it is no dishonour to Christ or his Ministers that they should take up formes of words devised by him for his owne worship.

Disc. *If there be any such necessity (of a set forme of psalmes) as is pretended, because some Ministers are not enabled of themselves to furnish the necessities of the Church: It should rather exempt them from the practise of singing psalmes, then give liberty to a devised forme; for it is a rule in divinity, that against a generall negative precept, no particular affirmative can be lawfull, unlesse that particular be warranted in Scripture, &c. But against this supposed generall negative precept, forbidding all devised helps, and furtherances in Gods worship, there is no particular warrant allowing it in singing of psalmes.*

Answ. It is not a supposed, but a reall negative precept, that generally forbiddeth all devised helps and furtherances in Gods worship, meaning helpes and furtherances devised by men without warrant from the word: For this is indeed the proper true meaning of the second *Commandement*, as hath beene shewed above; but wee deny that set formes of *psalmes* recorded in Scripture as helps and furtherances devised by men, but given by the Holy Ghost; and though the translation of the *psalmes* both in *English* and in verse, be by men, yet not without warrant from the Holy Ghost, who hath cõmanded, that the Word of God should dwell in us plenteously, teaching and admonishing one another in *psalmes* and *Hymnes*, and spirituall *Songs*, *Collos.* 3. 16. who hath also commanded that wee should sing with understanding, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. which the people could not doe to their owne understanding, or the understanding of their brethren, if the *psalmes* were not translated into their owne mother tongue; and when the translation doth fitly expresse the sense of the originall *psalmes*; we have warrant also to make use of the translation, though compiled by ordinary men, as we see the Apostles did many times make use of the translation of the *Septuagints*, provided the translation be not imposed upon us, as that was not upon them; and that liberty be still left to correct or reforme whatsoever shall be found in the translation to swerve from the true meaning and just weight of the originall Scripture; besides, it hath beene shewed above, (in opening the meaning of the second *Commandement*, that though the negative precept forbid all helpes and meanes of Gods worship devised by men

without warrant from the word; yet not the helpe of Tongues and Art, which not the wit and will of man, but the wisdome of God hath provided as necessary helps for the furtherance of sundry parts of Gods worship.

The *Scriptures* cannot be translated into our Mother Tongue, without the helpe of *Grammer*, nor the *Psalmes* into verse and meter without the helpe of *Poetry*, nor sung without the helpe of *Musick* (naturall *Musick* at the least) and therefore these kinds of helps wee make use of, as not being means of worship devised, or suggested by the wit or wil of man but as they are indeed prepared and ordained (according to the light of nature) by God: And so not falling under the generall negative precept which forbideth all humane Inventions, and Injunctions in the worship of God.

Disc. *Now whether the pretended necessity of a set forme, should exempt from the generall negative precept, forbidding devised formes, or from the affirmative precept of singing Psalmes let them judge who put the Exception.*

Answ. Wee doubt not to judge it safe to obey the affirmative precept of singing *Psalmes*, in a set forme of words though translated into English, and into verse by men becaufe set *Psalmes* are ordained of God, and their translation into English verse is necessarily implyed and warranted by God himselfe: And yet nevertheleſſe we do not pretend any necessity to exempt any such set forme from the generall negative precept which falleth under the prohibition of it; for these the negative precept did never intend to prohibite: *You need not therefore to wonder* (as you do in the following words) *why such a necessity* (as hath been opened) *of a set devised forme of singing should excuse a set forme of Psalmes, and yet not excuse a set forme of Prayer, but rather excuse the people from joyning in it.*

Answ. Becaufe there is no necessity at all of a devised set forme of Prayer unleſſe it be through the sinfull defect of the Ministers gifts in Prayer, which is such a necessity, as God abhorreth both it and the Minister for it; But the necessity of a set forme of *Psalmes* is such which God himselfe hath put, for the Celebration of that service with one accord, both in heart and voyce, as hath beene shewed, and therefore you might well have forborne that confident expreſſion.

Disc. *If Christians shall not exempt themselves from the stinted Prayers used in the Congregation, untill a materiall difference be shewed in these particulars, and that distinction of Arbitrary, and necessary, devised formes be approved by solid Reasons, and holy Scriptures, the world shall end* (I am confident) *before they shall seperate.*

For

For you see a materiall difference in these particulars, between the necessity of a set forme of *Psalmes*, and the necessity of a set forme of prayer. The necessity of the one is from Gods Ordinance, and therefore warrantable: The necessity of the other is from mans Ignorance, and such ignorance as maketh him unfit for the Ministeriall office, and therefore sinfull. *Answ.*

As for the distinction of Arbitrary, and necessary devised formes in your sence, wee neither use it nor approve it: And therefore have no cause to bring either holy *Scriptures* or solid *Reasons*, for the proofe of it: But in that sence wherein we use it, the distinction is so manifest from what wee have said already, that we thinke your selfe will require no further proofe of it.

CHAP. V.

Answering to the fourth Reason.

YOur fourth Reason may be thus contracted, If the Spirit of God do worke by means, and if he stir up good desires, yet giveth not ability to expresse our desires, in fit and significant words: Then it is lawfull for us to use all godly meanes to stir up the graces of God in us: and to premeditate how to utter our Requests, in such a forme and manner, as may best serve for our quickning, and the edification of others: and if the use of a premeditated forme of words in prayer do not stint the Spirit; a set forme of prayer cannot be injurious to the Spirit, grant the one, the other will follow. *Disc.*

If the speech be of publique prayer, the same spirit that giveth the Minister ability to deliver a Sermon, in fit and significant tearmes, doth in like sort give abilitie to expresse his desires in prayer, in fit and significant termes: no man is called of God to be a Minister of his Church, but he is as well apt to pray as apt to preach; But if the speech be of private persons, it is true, many good soules have better desires then utterance. In regard of which defect or without such defect we willingly condescend to you: It is lawfull, yea, and necessary to him, to use all godly meanes to stir up the graces of God in him, and to premeditate how to utter his requests in such sort as best serves for his owne quickning, and the edification of others: But this wee deny, that the using of a prescript form of prayer upon a booke, devised and imposed by one man upon another to be used as their prayer, is a godly means to stir up the graces of God in himselfe, or to edifie others; For that which the Holy Ghost hath not sanctified *Answ.*

ctified in his Word for the ſtirring up of the graces of God in a mans ſelfe or others; that is not a godly meanes for ſuch an end: But throughout the *Scriptures* we cannot finde any where, that the Holy Ghoſt hath ſanctified ſuch a meanes to ſuch an end: And then it is but an Image, which will rather teach a forme of godlineſſe, then edifie to the power of it.

Diſc. *Peradventure they would creep out by ſaying the ſpirit of God is our only helper in the time of Prayer, ſo that though at other times we might uſe helps to ſtir up the graces of the ſpirit, yet not in time of Prayer: But this diſtinction is not found in Scripture: neither can be deduced by any ſound reaſon from thence. The Spirit of God is at all times the ſole mover, and enabler of us to pray, and the uſe of lawfull meanes, and ſuch as ſuite with the nature of prayer, are at no time unlawfull, as it is fit we meditate and read before wee pray, ſo it is lawfull in prayer to kneele and lift up our hands and eyes, to uſe the helpe of the voyce, and the benefit of a Chriſtian friend to ſtir up affection. Therefore we may diſpute for the lawfulneſſe of booke-prayer, thus, If it be lawfull to uſe externall helpes in time of Prayer, the better to ſtir up affections, then booke prayer is not to bee condemned.*

Anſw. To creepe out, being a borrowed ſpeech from wormes; It being put upon us, holdeth us forth as wormes, and not as men, yea, worſe then wormes, (*Serpents*, rather then wormes:) That being compaſſed in with truth, are willing to creepe out by any evaſion, rather then to ſubmit to the authority of the truth: But let our reverend and godly brother, be intreated, not to deale ſuch meaſures to his Brethren: Leaſt the God and father of us both, be diſpleaſed and ſtir up others to returne like meaſure to you, heaped up, preſſed downe, ſhaken together: our plaine and ſimple Anſwer, (without creeping or ſhifting) Is this, that it is lawfull to uſe any externall or internall helps, either before prayer, to prepare us for it, or in prayer to quicken, or inlarge us in it, provided, they be ſuch meanes and helps as God hath ſanctified to ſuch an end, at ſuch a time.

As we readily grant the helpe of books and meditation, before prayer, ſo wee do grant alſo the helpe of holy and reverent geſtures in prayer, as bowing downe the knees, and lifting up of the hands, and eyes, and voyce, the preſence and aſſiſtance of a Chriſtian friend, for all theſe God hath ſanctified, to helpe the inward affections of the heart in prayer, doe but ſhew that God hath ſanctified Booke-prayers, impoſed upon us for our prayers, and that by the members of other *Congregations*, and wee will neither creepe nor ſtart away: But willingly bleſſe the Lord for his goodneſſe to you in this caſe, (as well as in many others)

like

like as *Phineas* and the Congregation of *Israel* blessed God; for the *Reubenites* and *Gadites* that were able to give so good an accompt of their actions, beyond the expectation of their brethren, *Ios.* 22.

In prayer penned by a godly and well experienced Christian, the case of a distressed soule may more pithily and amply be deciphered and anatomized then he of himselfe is able to doe it: and in such a case to deny him this lawfull helpe, is to take away the crutch from the lame, and bread from the hungry. Disc.

In case a distressed soule doe meete with a prayer penned, by a godly and well experienced Christian, and doe finde his owne case, pithily and amply deciphered and anatomized therein, wee deny not but his heart and affections may goe along with it, and say, *Amen* to it: And thus farre may find it a lawfull help to him; but if you set a part such a prayer to support him as a crutch in his prayers (as without which hee cannot walke streight and upright in that duty) or if hee that penned that prayer, or others that have read it, doe injoyne it upon him, and forbid him to pray (especially with others) unlesse he use that forme, this in stead of a crutch, will prove a cudgell to break the bones of the spirit in prayer, and force him to halt in worshipping God after the precepts of men; as it hath beene said before, so it may be againe remembred here; a man may helpe his spirit in meditation of his mortality, by beholding a dead mans scalpe cast in his way, by Gods providence; but if he should set apart a deaths head, or take it up as enjoyned to him by others, never to meditate or conferre with others about his mortality, and estate of another life, but in the sight and use of the deaths head, such a soule shall finde but a dead heart, and a dead devotion from such a meanes of mortification; if some formes of prayer, especially such as gave occasion to this Dispute, doe now seeme to be as bread to the hungry, we say no more but this, then hungry soules will never be starved, that never want store of such like bread as this is. Answ.

The ample and particular laying out of our necessities doth ease the heart, and move affections; and when this may be better done by the help of a Booke in prayer then of our selves, it is senselesse to accuse the use hereof, as a lip-labour, and a quenching of the spirit: he stinteth not the spirit that labours to blow the coales of grace, &c. Disc.

It is true, he stinteth not the spirit, nor quencheth him; that useth any meanes sanctified by the spirit to blow the coales of grace; but this we deny, that a stinted forme of prayer upon a booke, devised by men, and enjoyned to be used as the prayers Answ.

of a Christian soule, is a meanes sanctified by the spirit to blow the coales of his grace; or that the repeating of such a set forme of prayer, though ample and particular in laying out his necessities, will ease his heart, or move his affections according to God; God doth not delight ordinarily to breath in the Masterly injunctions of brethren upon brethren; or of one Congregation upon another, especially in such things whereof we have neither precept nor president in the word.

Disc. *He doth not substitute his Christian friend, in the place of the word, and spirit, who not able to lift up his soule to God, by reason of straightnesse of heart, and grievous pressure, doth crave his helpe and assistance in in prayer, and may not a godly Booke supply the want of a Christian companion.*

Answ. It is an ordinance of God, to crave the helpe of the prayers of our brethren, and to joyne with them: shew the like warrant for prayer upon a booke, prescribed to us, and then wee will grant a godly booke may supply even in this case the lacke of a Christian companion; If a Minister be not able to preach by reason of the straightnesse of his heart, and grievous pressure, he may get his Christian freind to preach for him; but he may not make use of a godly homily enjoyned to him by others, to supply the lacke of a Christian friend.

Dist. *Why should it be a sinne to reade or pronounce a godly forme of prayer, is it for that it is read and pronounced, or because a man cannot lift up his heart in faith unto God, when he uttereth his requests in a stinted forme of words; to assigne the former, is superstition: To say the latter is to offend against common experience?*

Answ. Wee doe not say it is a sinne to reade or pronounce a godly forme of prayer; but to reade a forme of prayer devised by others, and to set it apart to reade, being devised by others enjoyned to me as my prayer; This is sinne, not because it is pronounced, for all publique prayer is pronounced; nor alwayes in private, because it is read; for (as hath been said) a man may goe along in his spirit, and be affected with some prayer, which occasionally he readeth, and may lift up his owne heart in it to the Lord: but a sinne it is, as it is set apart by himselfe for his prayer; or as it is so enjoyned to him by others; and in publique it is of sinne, both because it is read, as the prayer of the Church (and so another booke brought into the Church besides Gods Booke) And because it is devised, not by the gift of Gods spirit in themselves, but in others, and also because by other it is prescribed or enjoyned to be read, as the service, and worship of God in another Church: For wee doe not finde

that

that ever God gave warrant either for the offering up of read prayers to God, as the ordinary prayers of the Church; and least of all for prayers prescribed and enjoyned by one Church unto another.

It is so far of from superstition to affirme this, that we looke at it as a superstition to deny it; for to speake of superstition according to the true nature of it (and not according to the old Etymologie) If superstition be *cultus supra statutum*, there is none of all these kindes, whether as read upon a booke in the Congregation, for their ordinary prayers; or devised by men of other Congregations for that end; or as imposed upon us by them: but they are all of them, and each one of them, *cultus supra statutum*, worships and helps, and formes of worship which never came into Gods heart to allow for his statute and worship.

Will any man object, that read prayer is not Gods ordinance? It hath beene answered already, that prayer is the ordinance of God; but whether our prayers be onely conceived in heart, or uttered by words; whether in our owne, or other words; whether by pronouncing or reading, that is not appointed; when spake hee one word of prayer within Booke or without, in this or that forme of words? Dist.

Reply hath beene made hereto before; as prayer is an ordinance of God, so are all the lawfull helps and meanes and formes of prayer; God hath plainly expressed his allowance of prayer conceived in the heart, and of prayer uttered, and pronounced by words both in our owne words, and in the words of others, whom God calleth to be our mouthes in the present assembly; But of set formes of read prayer devised by men of another Congregation, and prescribed and imposed upon others; it may justly be demanded when did God speake one word of them? And therefore, what have wee to doe with them? If it be said as God never spake word of reading prayer within booke; so never did he speake word of pronouncing prayer without book; the Text doth plainly enough expresse the contrary; for the Word of God speaketh expressly, that Christ lift up his eyes to heaven, in prayer, *Ioh.*17.1. & 11. 41. so did *David* Psal.133.1. and God hath ingraffed it in the hearts of all his people, to expresse the lifting up of their soules, their faith and hope, and desires to God, by lifting up their eyes stedfastly to Heaven in prayer, yea, God hath ingraffed it in the hearts of of all men, and even put some kinde of instinct into all living creatures, to lift up their eyes to heaven for what they want, *Psal.*145.15. Now, if the lifting up of the eyes to heaven in prayer be expressly mentioned in the Word, then how can it be truely said, that Answ.

God never spake word of prayer without Book; for they that lift up their eyes steadfastly to Heaven in prayer, cannot (without some distractions) cast them downe in prayer upon a booke, if lifting up of the eyes to Heaven in prayer, be a divine Institution (as the *Discourse* said even now) If it be an externall meanes to helpe the affection of the spirit in prayer) then it is against the Institution, and an hinderance to prayer, in stead of an helpe, to set a mans selfe or others, a forme of read prayers, wherein whilest hee is reading he must usually cast downe his eyes upon a Booke.

CHAP. VI.

Tending to give Answer unto the fifth Reason.

Disc. *WHere there is no breach of Law, there is no sinne: But the use of a prescript forme of prayer is no breach of Law, or of any Commandement of God.*

Answ. It hath been shewed above that it is a Breach of the second *Commandement* more waies then one, to devise and use a similitude, and forme, and means of worship which God never appointed, and such is the reading of a set forme of prayer, for the prayers of the Church.

1. It is an usurpation of more then propheticall or Apostollicall authority, to prescribe a set forme of *Lyturgie*, to the Churches, and a greater usurpation for one Congregation to prescribe the same to another, which is a sin both against the second and fifth Commandements.

3. It is a sinfull and disloyall betraying of the soules of Magistrats to countenance their intruding such prescript formes of prayer, upon Churches, by taking up the same formes from them, which they have not authority from God to injoyne, and stifly to plead for them, a sin forbidden in the fifth and sixth *Commandements*.

4. It is a sinfull betraying of Christian Liberty, which Christ hath purchased to every Church of his, by his precious Blood: for one Church voluntarily to take up the Injunctions and prescriptions of another, contrary to *Col.* 2. 20, 22. which Argument may be applyed another way, by a Testimony from the book of Common-prayer, Gods Service is perfect Freedome, but the reading of a set forme of prayer devised, and prescribed by others is not perfect freedome (for many would be right glad to be freed from it) therefore such reading of prayers is not Gods service.

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It is a sinfull breach of the rule of decencie, to offer up prayers to God in such a form, as cannot well stand with that decent gesture which is most sutable to prayer: It is a gesture most sutable to prayer; to lift it up to God as with hearts and hands, so with eyes steadfastly lift up to Heaven: But this gesture cannot fitly, and steadfastly be used, in read prayer, where the eyes must be usually cast downe upon the Booke.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein Answer is returned to the sixth Reason.

Disc. *If a set forme of prayer be disallowed, then a prescript forme of Catechisme and Confession must of necessity be condemned; but how absurd this is, he is very blind, or wilfull that seeth not, the necessity, antiquity and excellency, of catechizing is known to them that know any thing, touching the building and governing the House of God.*

Answ. Touching set formes of *Catechisme*, wee have answered twise before, in clearing some objections against the first Reason: whereto wee refer you, it hath been already shewed us, that God himselfe hath set before us sundry formes of *Catechisme*, *Davids Catechisme* was of one forme, *Psal.* 34. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Solomons* of another, *Prov.* 4. The *Apostles* of another, *Heb.* 6. 2. Yea, the *Apostles* name the heads of their *Catechisme*, but neither propound the questions, nor answers them in use, An evident Argument they never meant to binde Churches to set formes of *Catechisme*: The excellent and necessary use of catechizing young men, and novices (as hath been said before) we willingly accknowledge: But little benefit have wee seene reaped from set formes of questions, and answers devised by one Church, and imposed by necessity upon another: They must looke at them with coloured Spectacles, that can discerne them: the like may be said of forms of Confessions, when a Church is suspected and slandered with corrupt and unsound Doctrine, they have a call from God, to set forth a publique confession of their faith. But to prescribe the same as the confession of their faith of that Church to their posterity, or to prescribe the confession of one Church to be a form, and patterne unto others, sad experience hath shewed what a snare it hath beene to both, nothing in after ages must be held for a doctrine of the Church (though never so necessary a truth) unlesse it were found amongst the Articles of Religion agreed upon by their fathers, in the confession of their Faith.

CHAP. VIII.

Giving answer to the seventh Reason.

Disc. *IT is lawfull to aske common blessings of God dayly in a set forme of words,* Ergo, *It is not unlawfull to use a set forme of Prayer, and if to pronounce it, to read it also: for reading of it selfe, is not impure, as pronouncing cannot make an evill matter good, no more can reading make a good matter evill, pronouncing and reading being Adjuncts in prayer both indifferent.*

Answ. First, the *Question* with us is not so much about set formes of prayer in generall, as about set formes of prayer devised by men of other Churches, prescribed, and injoyned to be read as the prayers of the Church, or devised by one Christian and set a part by another, as his prayers, to which this Argument reacheth not.

Though we do not deny it to be altogether unlawfull to seeke common blessings of God dayly in a set forme of words, yet we would not encourage men to rest and content themselves in so doing, much lesse to binde themselves so to do: For besides that, a dayly set forme will easily degenerate to a formallity, how can a Christian be said to watch unto prayer (which wee are commanded to do, *Eph.* 6. 18.) If wee content our selves with the same set forme of prayer, this yeare, as the last: Besides, the common dayly blessings, which the *Discourser* instanceth in; as faith, patience, meekenesse, love, sanctification of Gods name. Comming of Christs Kingdome, the state of these things doth ever and anon vary, and to binde a mans selfe dayly to a set forme of prayer, for such things as the state whereof is so dayly varied, will bring in a loose and Incongruous kinde of prayers, fit onely for those, that do not discerne, or are not affected with the present state of things, either in themselves, or others.

When it is said, if it be lawfull to pronounce a set forme of prayer, then to read it; If the meaning be to read it, for a prayer, the consequence is not firme, for though (as the *Discourser* saith) the reading of prayer is not impure: Yet the praying of read prayers is the using of such a Crutch to pray (as he speaketh) which God hath not appointed, and that maketh such reading impure: And though pronouncing cannot make an evill matter good, nor similly reading make a good matter evill, yet reading to such an end, reading a set forme of prayer, prescribed to

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me for my prayer, maketh to me a Will-worship of that which he that conceived the prayer might lawfully have pronounced.

The pronouncing of a good Sermon by him that made it, is a good and acceptable Service to God, and his Church: But to read a Sermon as my preaching, which was made by another. maketh it neither so acceptable to God, nor to his Church, yea the reading of a mans owne Sermon in stead of preaching will much detract from the life and power of it, and make a man of God unserviceable for his place; Though reading and pronouncing of a thing, be both of them adjuncts, and common adjuncts too, to that which is pronounced or read, yet according to the ends and subjects, to which they may be applyed, the one may be lawfull, the other not indifferent but sinfull, the reading of a Sermon for preaching, is a sinfull manner of preaching; The difference will ever hold between the word read, and preached: They are two distinct Ordinances.

CHAP. IX.

Answering unto the eight Reason.

Disc. THE Jewes *before the comming of* Christ *used a prescript form of Prayer* (as it is probable and the learned note) *in the celebration of the Passeover, and that which they used* (as is very probable) *was approved by Christ himselfe.*

Answ. That the *Iewes* before the comming of Christ, did use certaine Rites in keeping the Passeover, It doth appeare by the Testimonies alledged, as also by *Causabon*, and others: And that some forms of prayer they used, according as the severall passages of the *Passover*, required: But it doth not at all appeare that they used any set formes of Prayer, but onely to that and the like effect, and that not by prescript or Injunction from one to another but leaving every father of a family at his liberty therein, much lesse will it appeare that our Lord *Iesus Christ*, tooke up any set formes of prayer by their example and least of all from their Injunction.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Giving Answer to the ninth Reason.

Disc. *All the reformed Churches at this day, doe not onely tollerate, but approve a set forme of Liturgie, &c.*

Answ. We count it a safe course to bewaile our owne sinnes and the sins of our Fathers, whereby we have polluted the holy things of God, moreor lesse, then to justifie our own aberrations from the rule by their presidents; great cause we have to blesse the Lord for the great light which the instruments whom God used in reforming all Protestant Churches brought into the darke world, and left behinde them; and yet it is well knowne in some thing or other, all of them, more or lesse failed: and it is more wonder they should see so much truth out of the midst of darknesse, then that they who saw so much, should faile in any thing; but wherein soever they failed the generations that have come after them, have too closely and ungodly stucke to their examples, yea, and have been more zealous in the defence thereof, then have sought to perfect what they left defective; yet this we may truly affirme, that we know none of all the reformed forraigne Churches that doe prescribe a set forme of prayer with necessity to be observed; but leave their Minister at liberty to use the same, or some other forme to the like effect at their owne direction, which taketh off a great part of sinne, and burthen of set formes; God knoweth how to passe by the remnant of iniquity of the transgression of them that seeke him in truth, although all the high places be not taken away, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. The Lord did not so looke at their high places, as to reject his people for Idolaters or superstitious persons, when they sought him in (truth of heart) though in high places; neither yet would he justifie their high places to after ages, by the example and authority of their ancestors: farre be it from us to censure the present Churches of obstinacy, who have persisted in the presidents left by our holy ancestors, those first reformed; yet neither may we be so unfaithfull as to sowe pillowes under the elbowes no, not of publique Churches, who knoweth not they have all been more studious and tenacious of what forme the doctrine and worship, and discipline was left unto them, then inquisitive after farther light, yea, sometimes more inclinable to looke backe into

into *Egipt*, then to haſten towards *Canaan*; it is true, wee have cauſe to ſuſpect our ſelves of error, rather then ſo many glorious lights of former and preſent times (to wit) if our faith were built upon our ſelves, we ſhould preferre their judgements and teſtimony before our owne; but ſeeing our faith reſteth onely on the Word of the Lord, and his ſpirit breathing therein, and the Word hath promiſed more and more light ſhall breake forth in theſe times, till *Antichriſt* be utterly conſumed and aboliſhed; we ſhall ſinne againſt the Grace and Word of truth if we confine our truth, either to the Divines of preſent or former ages.

Be that all the Churches may erre in this, yet I hope no moderate man can cenſure them of obſtinacie, as men not willing to conſent to the truth ſhewed and manifeſted; how then commeth it to paſſe, that none of them hitherto have ſubſcribed to this opinion, and to the practice of our brethren of the Separation? The true Churches of God cannot erre fundamentally, nor obſtinately againſt knowledge; but how can they be freed from one of theſe, let the oppoſites themſelves judge. *Diſc.*

Though we do not believe (as you do) that the true Churches of Chriſt cannot erre fundamentally, but doe conceive for a time they may (as the Church of *Iſrael* in the golden Calfe, and afterwards more dangerouſly in tne crucifying of Chriſt, and many Chriſtian Churches, almoſt all, in that time, when *Hierome* complaineth the whole world was become an *Arian*) yet we doe not looke at the reading of deviſed preſcript formes, as a fundamentall error; howbeit any error or ſinne perſiſted in againſt light, will in time argue an unſound and corrupt heart in the bottome. And although wee dare not excuſe true Churches (as you doe) from poſſibility of obſtinacy, at leaſt in ſome degree (for wee ſee *Moſes* and the Prophets often taxing the Church of *Iſrael* of rebellion and obſtinacy, *Deut.* 31. 27. *Ierem.* 22. 21. *Ezek.* 3. 7.) yet we dare not thinke that the Churches of Chriſt doe ſinne of obſtinacy (eſpecially of reigning obſtinacy) in this caſe; For many of them never ſaw the grounds, as have borne witneſſe againſt ſet and preſcript read formes of prayer; and thoſe that have ſeene their grounds, have not been convinced of the ſolidity of them; and therefore may not be charged with obſtinacy, till after they have beene convict of ſinne herein, and yet perſiſt herein againſt light of conſcience, which God forbid. *Anſw.*

This Reaſon (from the judgement and practice of other Churches) hath beene wont to be of great force in former times; otherwiſe the Apoſtle would never have alledged the practiſe and conſent of the

Churches to confirme the faithfull, and to stop the mouthes of the contentious, Acts 15. 22. 28. 1 Cor. 11. 16. and 14. 34.

Answ. The Argument from the practice and judgement of Churches, was of greater force in the Apostles times then ever since: the estate of the Churches as then remained *tanquam intemerata virgo,* whilest the Apostles and the Apostolique men lived; men that could not erre themselves; and were more watchfull and zealous then to suffer any error to get head in any of the Churches; but let them that presse the like argument now, let them shew us the like infallibility, vigilancy and zeale, of the guides of the Churches in these dayes; and we shall readily captivate our owne judgements to such divine testimony; otherwise the judgement of Churches now, being but humane testimonie (unlesse it might appeare grounded in Scripture warrant) we onely hearken thus farre to an Argument taken from the Churches, as reverently and meekely to attend to it, and if it dissent from Scripture, yet still to beare with meeknesse and patience, and brotherly love, any failing which is found in them; but not therefore to approve and justifie all their proceedings.

CHAP. XI.

Touching the other Question of the peoples joyning in prayer with the reading of a devised prescript Liturgie.

FInally, your Discourse commeth along to make good a a third assertion, which you had at first made a part of the state of the Question, to wit,

Disc. *That though it were unlawfull for the Ministers to use a prescript forme of prayer; yet no reason can be shewed, why it should be unwarrantable for the people to be present at such prayers and assemblies.*

Answ. We conceive that good reason may be shewed, Why, if it be unlawfull for the Minister to pray upon a booke, a devised, and prescript forme of prayer: it is unlawfull likewise for the people so to be present at it, as to joyne with it or seeme to joyne with it.

Our first reason is taken from the unity of the Church, if the Officers or Ministers, and all the members of the Church be one body, (as they are said to be, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. The sinne of the Minister of the Church openly committed in the publique worship

worship of God, is the sinne of them all, that doe joyne with him, and doe not beare witnesse against his sinne according to God.

A second Reason may be taken from the compactnesse of Gods worship, and communion which all the members in the Church have in it; all the worship of God in the Churches of Christ, is put up to God, as well by the people as by the Ministers ὁμοθυμαδὸν with one accord, *Acts* 1.14. The prayer of the Minister is the prayer of them; the matter of his prayer is the matter of all their prayers; the forme of his prayer (I speake of the externall forme, which is that wherein they can joyne) is the forme of them; if then it be unlawfull for the Minister to pray upon a booke, a devised prescript forme of prayer; it is a like unlawfull for the people to joyne with him.

The people are commanded to examine themselves before they draw nigh unto the presence of God, but not to examine whether the Ministers pray in one forme or other. *Disc.*

The members of the Church are not indeed to examine the secret sins of any but themselves, but the open sins of any of their brethren, they ought to admonish one another thereof, and to prevent with holy watchfullnesse the sinnes of one another, else the sin of one *Achan* becommeth the sinne and plague of all *Israel*. *Iosua* 7. 11, 12. *Answ.*

If the Minister pray coldly, (as they say all reading of stinted forms maketh but cold prayer: a drawing nigh to God with the lips, when the heart is farre from him) yet this is the fault of the Minister onely, not of all that are present, for such may be the Ministers fault to pray coldly, even in a conceived forme. *Disc.*

First, wee do not say (for our parts) that all praying upon a booke or instituted formes, is but cold prayer, because God may pardon the ignorance of his people, and accept the sincerity of their hearts, helpe them with some spirituall affections, even in such prayers, how be it, a forme of prayer not allowed of God will not (of it selfe) affect the heart with heavenly warmth, neither do we say that the coldnesse of the Ministers heart in prayer, If it spring from the inward corruption of his owne spirit, doth wrap the people into the fellowship of the same sinne, *de secretis non iudicat ecclesia*, nor is it defiled by the tolleration of secret sins in others. *Answ.*

But if the people be convinced, that the reading of prayer upon a booke prescribed to them by man, is a sin against the second *Commandement*, and so no true helpe or means of Gods worship,

is therefore some hinderance and impediment to it, then the people shall be guilty, not onely of the fellowship of those formes of prayer, but also of the coldnesse of the Ministers heart therein, if they willingly joyne in that which corrupteth and cooleth his spirit.

Dist. *Coldnesse and lippe-labour in prayer is not helped with Seperation, but by joyning the inward affections of the heart with the outward Service.*

Answ. True, if the coldnesse spring onely from the corruption of the Ministers heart, and not from the unsanctified means and helplesse helpe of prayer which he useth, to wit, a prescript forme of booke prayer, but as no man can wash his hands from sinne, that removeth not away all outward occasions of such sin, as much as in him lyeth, from himselfe and others, so no man can be freed from the guilt of such coldnes as the Minister and the people do contract by the customary use of such devised prescript formes of prayer, if he do not so much as in him lyeth remove such occasions of evill from them.

Answ. *The Iewes used a stinted forme of prayer (or Liturgie) in the Synagogues, at the celebration of the passeover, before the dayes of our Saviour Christ; yet Christ never perswaded the people to absent themselves, nor did he withdraw himselfe, but resorted to their Synagogues, and the Temple; as did also his Apostles after his ascension.*

Answ. Of the *Iewish* formes of prayer, wee have spoken before, And have justly denied that they tooke up any booke prayers, devised by others prescribed to them; and therefore no marvel! if neither Christ nor his Apostles withdrew themselves from them; seeing the outward face of administrations, was onely of Gods Ordinances; not of the inventions of men, at the least so farre as not to draw them into fellowship or communion with them therein; the corruptions found amongst them, both in doctrine and worship Christ and his Apostles did freely beare witnesse against, both to themselves, and the people.

Dist. *It is not lawfull to separate from the Churches, or assemblies of the Saints, in whose fellowship we may serve God with an holy worship, and believe in him with an holy faith; for if a prayer conceived in the heart and uttered with the voyce be a pure service of God, the same read upon a booke, becometh not impure to them that heare it with holy affections.*

Answ. Wee doe not separate from the Church and assembly of the Saints, but willingly joyne with you in every part of your holy worship; and in every doctrine of your holy faith only we withdraw our selves from such parts of your administrations, where-

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in we cannot joyne with you, but wrap our selves into the fellowship of such sinne which (in our consciences) wee see committed by you: How the same prayer conceived by the spirit of a Minister, and pronounced in his owne, and in the peoples name to God, may be a pure service to God, yet the same written in a booke, and prescribed to others to be read by them as their prayers, may be an unlawfull forme of worship hath beene shewed above; it is wearisome to repeat the same things so often.

Disc. *Lastly, the Scribes and the Pharisees sinned grievously in corrupting the Law with their false glosses, and defiling the worship of God with their owne inventions; nevertheless, the faithfull held fellowship and communion with them in the worship of God; and that by the approbation of the Prophets, and of Christ himselfe; but surely the health of the Church is more crazed by such great infirmities, then by the onely toleration and use of a prescript forme of prayer.*

Answ. The substance of this objection hath beene answered even now; the faithfull did, and might lawfully joyne in worshiping God in his owne Ordinances, notwithstanding the accidentall pollution which the *Scribes* and *Pharises* brought in, both in doctrine and worship; for corruptions in doctrine doe not draw the hearers into fellowship of the same faith, if they beware of the leven of such doctrine, and beare witnesse against it; in time and place according to God; and as for the pollutions in worship, they chiefly lay in their private superstitious devotions, of washing their hands, and pots & cups, and brazen vessels, and not in their outward administrations of publique ordinances; especially such wherein their act and the peoples was offered up together with one accord; but there is not the like reason of publike prayer, wherein both Minister and people doe all joyne together, as one man, with one accord; where any knowne sin in the outward administration of the Minister is the sinne of all the people that joyne with him. The Lord give us hearts to deny our selves and to sit close to him; that he may delight to lead us on by his spirit of truth in all truth and goodnesse; and still delight to be mercifull to us, in pardoning and healing all our formes and present pollutions, for his holy Names sake in Jesus Christ, *Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.

Courteous Reader, I intreat thee take the paines to correct these faults escaped:

PAge 1. toward the end, for have, *reade* give, *ibid. reade* penned or printed, *p.* 4. *l.* 11. *r.* the Minister, *p* 4. *l.* 21. *r.* First we grant, *p.* 5. *l.* 4. put the figure 5. in the margine, *l.* 6. *r.* state of things, *p.* 6. *l.* 4. *r.* for to be present, *p.* 6. *l.* 23. *r.* Holy inward manner in the good affections, *p.* 8. *l.* 9. for prayers *r.* paines. *p.* 9. *l.* 5. *r.* of preaching, *p.* 9. *l.* 33. falshead *r.* falshood, *l.* 36. *r.* not unlawfull, *p.* 12. *l.* 6. *r.* for out *r.* ought, *p.* 17, *l.* 9. *r.* second Commandement, *p.* 17. *l.* 41. *r.* seeing *p.* 18. *l.* 36. for offered, *r.* offereth, *p.* 19. *l.* 11. in stead of 80. 91. 92. *r.* 30 31. 32. *p.* 21. 20. for 17. *r.* 7. *p.* 23. *l.* 28. *r.* *Numb.* 6. 22. 23. *p.* 25. *l.* 36. *r.* injoyning, *p.* 26. *l.* 16. for 29. *r.* 92. *p.* 28. *l.* 13. *r.* to judge what portion, *p.* 30. *l.* 23. *r.* plausibly argue that the, *l.* 26. for prevented, *r.* approved, *p.* 38. *l.* 12. leave out *in*, *p.* 39. *l.* 35. *Psal.* 133. 1. *r.* 123. 1. *p.* 41. in the margine, adde the figure 5. *p.* 41. *l.* 19. *r.* of the faith, *p.* 44. *l.* 5. *r.* rather then to justifie.

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